PHILIP KYRITSIS

TOTAL OBJECTOR

in time of general conscription

Autobiography

Part 2

ATHENS 2025

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Editing: Filippas Kyritsis

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To my children Christiana and Giorgos to learn what I did in my life, how I did it and why I did it, as well as to everyone who found themselves stuck in difficult situations and thought they were to blame for it.

Note:

In order to avoid misunderstandings, I must emphasize that my autobiography was completed in 2017. The prologue was written in 2023, and its English translation was uploaded online in 2025 and 2026 in three parts.

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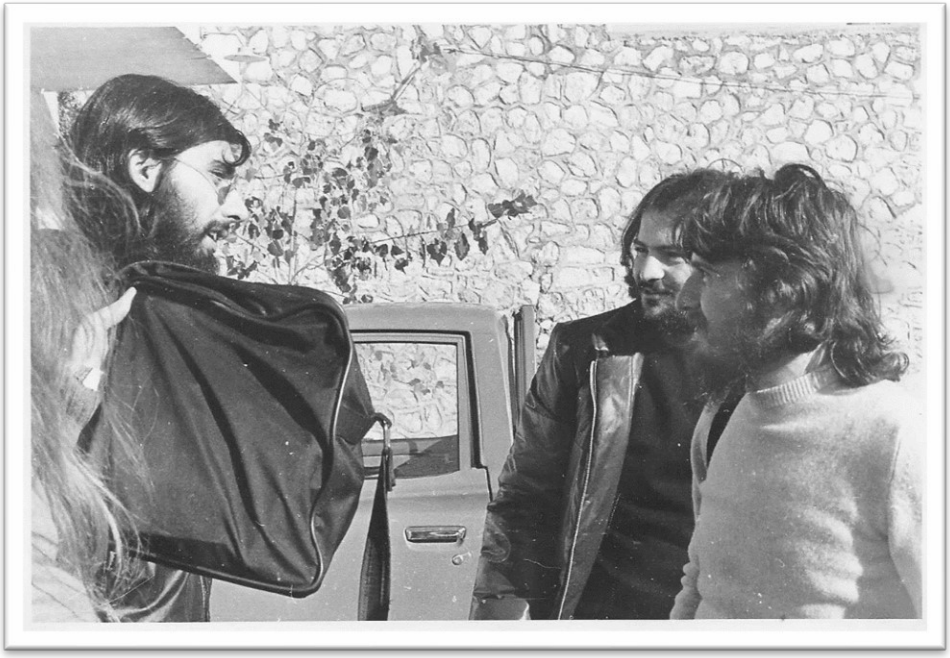
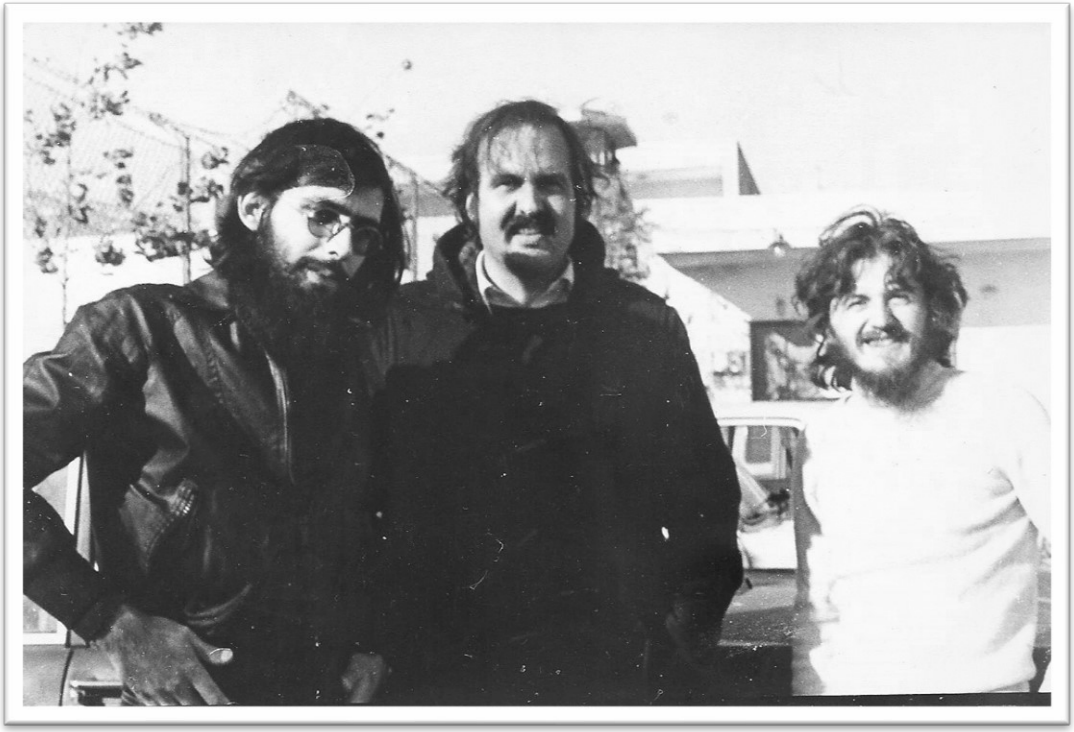
RELEASED FROM PRISON AND UNIVERSITY AGAIN

First days after prison – Katerina Gogou and Christos Zygomalas

I was getting out of prison after 3 years and 9 months exactly from the day of our arrest but, at least, I wasn't getting out alone: I had helped two others get out with me. From the director's office, they did not give me and Scandalis the release papers, but a simple certificate, because we would have to get the release papers from the disciplinary prison of Corfu, where we were registered. So, I never got release papers. At the exit of the hospital, apart from Sophia, my brother and Sophia's brother, were waiting for us our lawyer Eleni Dimoulea and the psychiatrist Thodoros Megaloikonomou who had supported us like no other doctor while we were inside. In those days, a revolt had erupted in Korydallos prisons and on the roof of the fourth wing, which had a view of the exit of the hospital, many prisoners were gathered who, as soon as they saw us, started shouting slogans. Before I got into the car of my uncle Meltos, who was waiting for me, I shouted a few times the slogan "We win our rights by fighting". My father who had promised me, when I was in Aegina, that he would come in his car and pick me up from prison, had been dead for over a year and a half.



From left to right, me, Kyriakos Moiras and Giannis Scandalis outside the entrance of the prisoners' hospital of Korydallos, we have just been released from prison



Me on the left and Scandalis on the right outside the entrance of the prisoners' hospital of Korydallos at the time of our release from prison. In the middle the priceless for his support to us psychiatrist Theodoros Megaloikonomou

I haven't been in prison since then, so I didn't experience another time the feeling of being out of prison after so many years and so much suffering, which was unprecedented for me at the time, if we consider that out of 3 years and 9 months I spent one year and one month doing hunger strikes. Although 37 years have passed since then, no other prisoner in Greece has gone on so many hunger strikes, going so long without food. Anyway, my uncle Meltos drove me and Scandalis to the house my mother was renting in Vrilissia, where a large table with relatives and family friends was waiting for us. Scandalis had come with me, because I suggested that, as he had no house of his own to stay in, he should stay at mine for a few days until he could see what he would do. I couldn't sit at the table for a long time. The feeling of freedom had made me so nervous that I roamed the rooms of the house enjoying the beauty I saw around me. For so many years I only saw the gray walls of prisons or the monochromatic, dull-colored walls of the hospital or mental institution. Therefore, if I have to describe what freedom means, I will prefer the adjective colorful. A colorful reality that you can't get fed up looking it. Apart from

the fact that you move freely in any direction you want and do not follow specific routes, like in prison.

I don't remember exactly how I spent my first day out of prison. Anyway, I went with my brother, Sophia, Scandalis and my brother's childhood friend Mimis to the huge Alfa-Beta supermarket, in Kifissias, and we baught food. We were really keen for food after 60 days of hunger strike and we also had money, because the concert for our release had made a profit of 60,000 drachmas, which I, Scandalis and Moiras shared. The next day, Sophia, Scandalis and I went to Katerina Gogou's house, on Troias Street in Kypseli. Gogou knew Sophia intimately, because sometime before she had hosted her for a few days at her home. But me and Scandalis knew only from the newspapers. In her house, in addition to her 14-year-old daughter Myrto, I met the later director Giorgos Kordellas and the poet from Ithaka Giorgos Daglas. To celebrate the event, Gogou opened and we drank a champagne. I don't remember having drunk in the past or drinking in the future champagne during my life. Kordellas also took a series of photos, where I am nowhere to be seen, because I didn't want to be photographed, I don't remember exactly why. I remember that what had impressed me most in that house was the library. I don't think I had ever seen such a big library in my life until then. Daglas and I met again after 34 years in Ithaca.

At Katerina Gogou's house. From left to right, Giannis Scandalis, Sophia, Katerina Gogou, George Daglas and Giannis Argyriou, brother of Sophia

One of the following days, when I, Sophia and Scandalis were at Syntagma square, we happened to meet there my friend Christos Zygomalas, the anarchist composer. He was very happy to see us and we managed to make him come to Vrilissia with us, to spend the evening together. In Vrilissia there was also a guitar belonging to Sophia, which she had bought when she was young to learn guitar, but she never learned. With this guitar, we persuaded Zygomalas to play us some of his old and new songs, which, together with the long conversation we had, we recorded on a cassette tape in the cassette recorder that my brother had bought with money I had received from the scholarship, when I had entered Panteio. Until that time Zygomalas, being more frightened than anti-commercial I would say, had not released any records or tapes of his songs. Asimos had by then only released the first four tapes, if I remember correctly. Among the songs that Christos had played for us at that time was "Ulrike Meinhof", a song that was never released on tape, disc or CD. Just like a revolutionary song played in Exarchia square in 1977, "In history I want to break in" that was never released. With the original lyrics of the latter, however, and the music changed to rebetiko, Zygomalas made a song at the end of the 2000s, in order to protest against the economic crisis that had then crept up on the country. Unfortunately, after that historic, I would say, meeting with Christos Zygomalas, it took a whole 28 years for us to see each other again and 33 to sit at the same table again.

Me, Sophia and Giannis Scandalis: First days out of prison and attempt to go abroad with him

In those days, too, I, Sophia and Giannis Scandalis went to my mother's country house 50 kilometers away from Athens. We must have had a lot to say to each other, so we liked to be together all the time. I do not remember, however, whether it was the same or another time in those days, that I and Sophia stayed in this house for five days. However, I remember that it was then that I first thought that, since I got out of prison, none of my comrades had looked for me, not even on the phone. Since then, I may say, I began to suspect that in order to be of interest for the others, we should be in an extreme situation. What had happened to so many people who were interested in me while I was in prison? I was beginning to realize that, while I was in it, the public's interest was drawn to the Filippas the symbol and not Filippas the man. This had cost me a lot and made me feel very alone.

Giannis Scandalis and I near my mother's summer house, a few days after being released from prison.

Scandalis, after a few days of staying at my mother's house in Vrilissia, left the house, when my mother asked us to move his bed to a storage room that must have once served as a servant's room. While he stayed with us, he and I drew up an announcement about our release and sent it to the newspapers. There we said that we had asked for an amnesty and not a pardon and that we left behind us other anarchists in prison, such as Kalapodopoulos, Karabatakis and Barlos. That is why the struggle should continue until their release.

When Scandalis left our house, he went and stayed with a cousin of his, who had taken on the whole burden of supporting him while he was in prison. In fact, in a demonstration of support for us, the cops had broken her arm, as she told us, when a few days after the demonstration she had come and seen us in the prisoners' hospital. But we didn't get lost with Scandalis. On the contrary: The three of us decided to go abroad together by train. At first we would go to Skopje, to his sister's house. Indeed, again on loan from my uncle Meltos, as in 1975, seven years ago (now it was January 1982), I, Sophia and Giannis took the train to Yugoslavia one of those days (then this country had not yet been fragmented into separate states, as it is today). We must have taken the famous "Acropolis" train that went all the way to Munich West Germany (Germany, at the time, was divided into two states, known

as West and East Germany). But "it wasn't meant to be" for me and Sophia to get out of the prison called Greece that year. Because when we stopped in Gevgeli, on the Greek-Yugoslavian border, and the police took our passports to check them, they didn't bring Sophia's passport back and they told us that there was a problem from Athens and we would have to solve it from there. So Sophia and I got off the train and Scandalis continued the trip abroad alone. The problem was that Sophia, as a condition for her parole, was also prohibited from leaving the country until the end of her original sentence, i.e. until March 24, 1983. She also had an obligation to report to the Security Police office of her neighborhood every first and fifteenth of the month. This condition had been violated by Sophia after her first visit to the Security Police, being aware that according the law they had the right, due to this violation, to lock her back in prison. We probably did not pay attention to the ban on exiting the country and did not consider it as a possibility at the time, since Sophia had not been deprived of her passport and she had it with her even in prison! We paid for it, however, with a journey cut short at the border, with money for tickets that were lost and with at least five hours of waiting, in a frozen border cafe, where we waited for the next train that would come from abroad to Greece and would take us to Thessaloniki from where we would take the train to Athens. In Athens, when we returned, we reported Sophia's exit ban to "Eleftherotypia's" journalist Giorgos Votsis, who had written good words about us when we were inside, and that's why we had the courage to visit him, after our return from the borders, in his office. He published the complaint after a long time, acting on another opportunity, although he was very considerate of us and had suggested that we go out together, one day, to have a drink and talk. This never happened, because I thought that dating high-ranking people, such as famous journalists, I would be a sycophant. Maybe I was wrong, but by then I felt the stratification of society on my skin.

Cain: The End of the Dream

Katerina Gogou and I met again several times at her house at that time. I learned from her, once I had been to her house alone, that Sophia's relations with Cain had gone further than I could imagine. This information made me, when I returned home to Vrilissia, quarrel fiercely with Sophia and ask her divorce. She didn't want it any way and insisted so much that we continue together, that in the end I agreed. If we had split up then, I'm sure everyone who believes in the omnipotence of the state to destroy people's dreams, however determined they may be, would have been happy. After all, this is one of the messages of the famous book "1984" by George

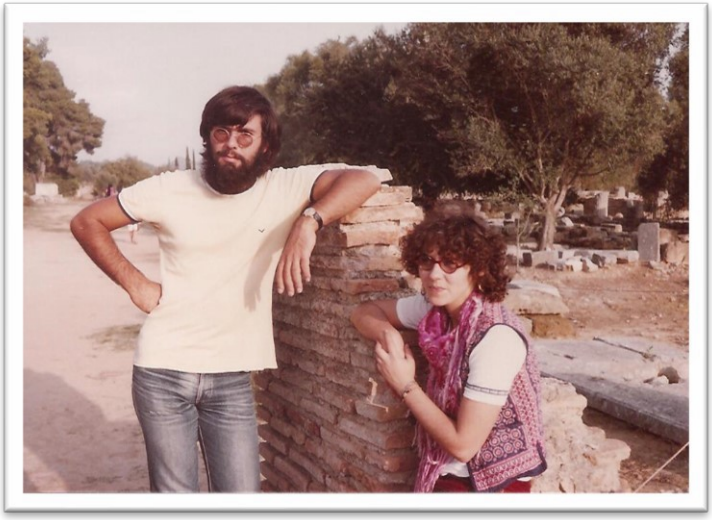
Orwell. I had only seen this wretched, Cain, once, when he had come to our house in Vrilissia, shortly after my release from prison. After the revelation of his role, about which Sophia informed him and told him that from then on she was cutting off all relations with him, I did not see him again, except once in the Propylaea of the University of Athens with a girlfriend of his (when I participated in a multi-day mobilization of support for Moiras, who went back to prison in 1983, and his comrade Danatos), as well as one more time at a book festival in the Field of Mars. As his malice was not exhausted by what he had done behind my back, while I was in prison, but continued, I will speak of him again below.

Unforgettable days with the Portuguese comrade

Fortunately my father, before he died, had rented out his factory and the factory land to various marblers, who each had set up their workshops there, so that when I got out of prison I would collect my share of the rents and this is how we were living, me and Sophia. I could, therefore, continue my studies at Panteio, which the president of the court that had condemned me had told my father that I would never continue. But since attendance at the classes was not compulsory, I was limited to learning the dates of the exams, reading the lessons, taking them and passing them. I've never had a lesson that I wanted to pass and didn't pass. I had only failed in two third-year courses before I went to prison, but these exams I had taken just to keep the draft deferment, which required us to be examined at at least two courses a year. That's why I had gone and taken these exams, without being prepared. In fact, in one, in Political Science, I wrote that the position of the political scientist is on the road, to fight for equality and freedom (or something similar I wrote that I don't remember now). However, the way I had written it could be considered offensive, as I learned later from the professor's assistant who corrected my writing, Alkis Rigos. I knew Rigos from the committee that was set up in 1974 to draw up the new statutes of the Panteio's student association. In that committee, Rigos represented P.A.S.P., the student organization of PA.SO.K. In particular, Rigos had told me at the time that, if the professor (Georgos Vlachos who later became dean and academician) had read my writing, he would have taken me to the school's disciplinary board, to be punished.

What I needed, when I got out of prison, was certainly not to be a student, like before I entered prison. It was to travel to enjoy the possibility of freedom in relation to imprisonment, when you can't go anywhere and the state takes you where it wants but not out of prison.

It was as if my need for travel was heard by the goddess Tychi, and not long after the day of my release from prison, a Portuguese comrade appeared at Sophia's paternal home in Byron, who had found Sophia's address in some anarchist Portuguese paper. Her name was Maria de Lourdes Ricardo dos Reis Pucarinho and she must not have been more than 25 years old. I mention her name in its entirety, because I was impressed by its extent. I guess the Portuguese have a high opinion of themselves and that's why they like big names. It is natural, since Portugal was the first chronologically colonial empire in recent history and the last to break up into its constituent parts, in 1974. Even the navigator who was the first to circumnavigate the world with his flotilla was Portuguese, namely Ferdinand Magellan. So with this Portuguese woman (I prefer to call her Portuguese, because that's what we called her), with my brother who hosted her and our childhood friend, Mimis, as a driver, me and Sophia toured, in my father's car, in one day, some of the most important sights of the Peloponnese. In particular, we went to Mycenae, Nafplion (we didn't manage to enter the castle Palamidi, because it was closed when we arrived) and Olympia.



With the Portuguese woman in the archaeological site of Olympia

From Olympia we went up to Vytina, where we spent the night, and the next day we returned to Athens. The Portuguese woman stayed a few weeks in Athens and, before leaving, she told the embassy that she had lost her wallet, so she returned home at the expense of the embassy. Since she left I have kept up some correspondence with her, in the hope that we may someday visit her in her home country. But for the time being, Sophia was banned from leaving the country, as we saw, and that's why we couldn't travel abroad, even if we found the money.

For the first time in my life in beautiful Lefkada, eight years after I saw it from afar

And since I could not travel abroad, I seized the opportunity, when Easter 1982 was approaching, to go with Sophia to her mother's hometown, Lefkada, where her relatives would host us. Before we left, we had gone to her mother's house in Byron and suggested that we go together. She had refused but that had not impressed me so much as impressed me a difficulty she had in speaking. I didn't pay attention, because I knew she couldn't hear well, so maybe she had a communication problem.

So in March 1982 I found myself for the first time in Lefkada, which until then I had gazed upon only from afar, during the six-day school trip in 1974, as Moses gazed upon the Promised Land. Moses never set foot on the Promised Land, but I not only set foot on beautiful Lefkada, but this island in the future played a central role in my life, as we will see below. At that time, however, I was a visitor on the island. But not just a visitor: I was the husband of a Lefkadian woman's daughter and more widely known, at least on the left, because of my struggles in prison. In fact, from one of Sophia's uncles (two lived on the island), who was a leftist, I learned that he and a young civil engineer had collected the 200 signatures that, when we went on strike to get Sophia out, I had read that they had gathered in Lefkada requesting the release of Sophia. This uncle, Kostas Rontogiannis, was an extraordinary man. Apart from hosting us every time we went to Lefkada, he talked with me for hours about the political and social life of the country and we agreed on many things. Every day he bought the newspaper "Avgi" which at that time had a small circulation in Lefkada, as well as throughout Greece. In fact, during the German occupation of Lefkada (1943-1944) he had escaped with a communist friend and neighbor from the German command post in Lefkada. Had he been caught then, he would have been executed.

The old Lefkada that no longer exists

While we stayed in Lefkada, on my first trip there, Sophia and I walked a lot. We walked many hours a day, because we were also young then and had stamina and will, and the city of Lefkada (as well as the surrounding area) is flat. It was worth all that walking, because Lefkada was very beautiful then. Apart from its beautiful castle, which, when I visited, I found that such a scene I had seen in my dream the night I had spent in the disciplinary prison of Corfu, Lefkada then also preserved its old saltworks and small taverns for fishermen on its eastern port. The salt pans had ceased to function for many decades, but the landscape remained and was extremely beautiful. In the shallows of the sea, where of old they collected the salt

even old Lefkadian women went and bathed. Around the salt pans there was a forest of eucalyptus trees. But the city also looked beautiful from the distance of the salt pans, which, I should mention, were in front of its eastern port. The houses were colorful and almost all two-story (due to the frequent earthquakes that hit the island), something unusual for me who was used to seeing only white or gray buildings from the Athens smog. The city of Lefkada, before the British gave it to Greece along with all the Ionian Islands in 1864, was called Agia Mavra, a name given to it by the Venetians who built it in the 17th century. Its inhabitants were known as Agiomaurites and in fact, those who lived there from grandfather to grandfather, were also called Branelloi (which some attribute to the alleged similarity of Lefkada to the island of Burano in Venice). This city did not look beautiful only from the salt pans. It was really beautiful. This was due to the fact that it maintained a historical center from the time it belonged to the Serene Republic of Venice, something that only Lefkada and Corfu, of all the Ionian islands, had managed to preserve. The rest of the islands lost their historical centers from a great earthquake that happened in 1953. In Lefkada, the last great earthquake happened in 1948, but it did not manage to level the city. One of the damages caused by the earthquake of 1948 was the collapse of the bell tower of the Pantokrator church, which is close to Sophia's mother's home, where Sophia's uncle was staying. In the precincts of this church, the most famous Lefkadian is buried along with some other nobles and noblewomen: the poet Aristotle Valaoritis, whose family also owns the verdant island of Madouri, which is opposite the cosmopolitan city of Nydri. This church is private and it happened, much later, that I also met its owner.

The church of Pantokrator in the city of Lefkada, like the rest of the churches in the city (which are rather many), differs from the churches of Greece that I had known until then. Like all the churches of the Ionian Islands, the churches of Lefkada are not imitations of Byzantine churches, like most in Greece, but are built based on the Western style, with which most of the churches in Venice are also built. They are long and narrow (basilica style) and have a triangular facade. Those that are painted on the outside are painted a dark yellow, which I once heard is known as Turin yellow. But it is not only their external appearance that makes these churches beautiful. It is also their content. Because they were all built at the time when Lefkada belonged to the state of Venice, the iconographers who painted their icons followed the Western and not the Byzantine style of iconography. This resulted in these icons being extremely beautiful, just like the icons found in the churches of Italy, Spain and Western Europe. They are not deliberately ugly, like the images without perspective and with distorted faces and landscapes, which are found in the churches of Greece, outside of the Ionian Islands. They are beautiful, because their painters they tried to

be as realistic as possible like the Flemish paintings in the 16th century and later, such as by Rembrandt, Rubens, Van Dyck, etc. Even the winged altarpieces of these churches are extremely elaborate, like the corresponding wing altarpieces of the churches of Venice. All this has the result, when one enters a church in the city of Lefkada, to feel that one is entering a gallery with works of Western painters.

In addition to centuries-old churches, in Lefkada there are also many old houses located around the central square as well as parallel to the West and East ports of the city. The roads between them are very narrow and few can fit a car. That is why at the entrances of the houses, most of which are a little elevated and have a few steps, you see sitting, or at least at that time you saw sitting, the women of the houses embroidering or knitting and talking to each other. At that time it was common for the residents of these old houses in Lefkada to grill fish on improvised grills. There were still some fishermen at that time. Poor people who made a living by fishing. The neighbor, e.g. of Sophia's uncle, with whom the uncle had escaped from the German command post, he was a fisherman. I remember his wife, Mrs. Koula, a very good woman, selling fish in front of the church of Pantokrator. Even the Municipality of Lefkada caught and sold fish. They were caught in the fish farm which is in the front of the city and is known as ivari. Because they were cheap, these fish were sold immediately and that's why to buy them you had to stand in line from seven in the morning. The fish farm is a wire-fenced part of the lagoon that fronts the city's western port. This lagoon is separated from the sea by a strip of land known as Gyra. This lane is some kilometers long and in the center it is wide enough to have a few houses and an old church, from the 14th century, which belonged to the Patriarchate of Constantinople (stavropygiaki). Many times I circled this lane, the Gyra, several on foot but most by bicycle. Even today Gyra remains an ideal road for cycling and every year cycling races are organized there.

With Sophia, at that stage, we had crossed on foot the Venetian olive grove that occupied the plain outside the city, and we had climbed the mountain where the monastery of Faneromeni, who is the patron saint of Lefkada, is located. It was sunset when we arrived at the monastery, from which the whole city of Lefkada can be seen from above. We took very nice pictures. This was the first time I went to the monastery, because I went back many times. Now most of the olive trees of the Venetian olive grove have been cut down and in their place you see hotels and luxury houses with large gardens.

Also apart from the beautiful castle of Lefkada, which is surrounded by the sea and was then open and anyone could visit it whenever they wanted, we had also visited another castle, the Tekes castle, which is on a hill before we arrived,

coming from Athens, on the drawbridge that connects the opposite coast with the island of Lefkada. This castle during the Ottoman Empire, which ruled in Roumeli (southern central Greece) which is opposite to Lefkada until 1830, was a dervish monastery and that's why it got the name "Tekes". The view from this castle is fantastic, because below, before the sea that can be seen in the background, are some very extensive swamps that from above, especially towards sunset, take on an eerie appearance. The city of Lefkada can also be seen from the Tekes castle, which is still open at all hours.

We also visited the prisons of Lefkada. By then they had been closed for a long time, but they had not been demolished. Of course, they were not open for us to enter and explore their premises, but we were able to climb one of the watchtowers and see the courtyard from above. From where the prison was located, at the edge of the western beach, a large marsh started, parallel to the lagoon, reaching to the end of the lagoon. That's where the Gyra I mentioned above ends. The beach in front of it is known as Windmills' beach, because there are ruins of windmills that were in use centuries ago. This swamp together with the terrible humidity, which prevails in the city of Lefkada winter and summer, should have made the prisons very unhealthy. The mosquitoes in the prisons would be a cloud and the smell from the swamp some days would be unbearable. In these prisons, as he had told me, my uncle Meltos had also spent a night when, after being sentenced to 20 years in prison for collecting money for political prisoners, he was taken by boat to Corfu. In the past, communication with Lefkada and Corfu was done by boat, because the roads that today cross the northern Peloponnese (Athens-Patras highway) and southern Central Greece (the road that passes outside Galaxidi and Nafpaktos) did not exist.

When I first went to Lefkada, in front of Sophia's mother's paternal house there was an orchard, which belonged to Sophia's mother's family. Now there is a street with shops. There was even an outdoor toilet in the orchard, something I had not seen since I used to go to Trikala as a child. Flowers and vegetables were planted in the orchard. It was looked after by Sophia's uncle, with whom we sit every night in the kitchen of the parental home and drink Robola wine (white wine of Lefkada). The kitchen, I remember, was very small and the people who gathered there were too many for its dimensions. Another thing that impressed me about Sophia's relatives at the time is that her two uncles, "Braneloi" nicknamed Kavkias (because all Lefkadians have nicknames), did not speak the Greek that I was used to. They spoke Lefkaditika, a dialect with many Italian words spoken with a singsong accent, like the pronunciation of Italian by the Venetians. Also, because the town is small (it had around 7,000 inhabitants at the time), more or less the inhabitants knew each other, so every night I heard the Lefkada gossip from Sophia's uncle.

In Lefkada, at that time, we also found a girl that Sophia had met in prison. She lived with her mother and sister in an old mansion overlooking the sea. I visited this mansion in time by then. I say in time because it was later demolished. In front of this house at that time there was a summer cinema that had stopped working. Today it is a park. This mansion was the only mansion in Lefkada that I ever entered. From Sophia's friend I also got to know the nicest traditional cafe in Lefkada. This cafe is outside the city on a huge plot full of olive trees from the Venetian era. It was known as "American" by its owner who had emigrated abroad. Much later I found out that "The American" had not emigrated in America but in Australia!

In Lefkada, the first time I went, we stayed until Easter, when Sophia's uncle skewered a lamb. It was not common to skewer a lamb in Lefkada, at least in the capital of the island which, at least at that time, maintained some European tradition, but Sophia's uncle used to skewer lambs every Easter in those years. The lamb was skewered in a grassy plot behind Sophia's mother's ancestral home, where there were some ramshackle one-story old fishermen's houses. At the same time, had skewered a lamb in the same plot the wife of the neighbor of Sophia's uncle, the communist, with whom the uncle had escaped from the German command post, which today is the Public Library of Lefkada. Together with the children of the neighborhood, one girl of whom, when she grew up, became a musician and became quite friendly with us, I can say that quite a crowd had gathered at the spot. I had not experienced such an event since I was a child, when I went with my father to Trikala. We certainly had a good time that Easter and because it coincided with my first trip to Lefkada, it was memorable. Unfortunately, what was to follow that year was not pleasant at all. Quite the opposite: it was awful.

The beginning of a sad, but very sad story

In particular, when we returned from Lefkada and visited Sophia's mother, to tell her how we had passed, we found that the problem with her difficulty in speaking remained. Sophia thought, therefore, to ask the psychiatrist Megaloikonomou, who was known to us from his support while we were in prison, about what her mother should do. Megaloikonomou recommended an encephalogram. When the brain scan was done, it was found that something was wrong with her brain and therefore they recommended further tests at a hospital. From these it emerged that she had a brain tumor. This was a big blow to Sophia who began to worry for her mother's life before she had even been a year out of prison. Me, all I could do was advise her to keep it cool with her mother, so that the latter would not understand how serious

her condition was. Sophia's next step was to get her mother admitted to Agios Savvas, the most well-known anti-cancer hospital. She actually managed to get admitted and there she was seen by a neurosurgeon. This neurosurgeon's opinion was that any operation would cause permanent paralysis in some parts of the body and would be a gift-giveaway. However, he did not recommend any other treatment and the hospital told Sophia to take her mother and bring her back after a month. Sophia brought her back, but again nothing was done to her. Meanwhile her mother's condition was deteriorating. Since nothing was done to her in Greece, Sophia had thought of taking her to Russia, just in case something could be done for her there. But she was banned from leaving. We made a request to the competent Misdemeanor Council, which was in Piraeus, to lift the terms of her dismissal from prison, and after some time it declared itself incompetent and sent the case to the Misdemeanor Council of Athens. This, again after some time, sent the case back to Piraeus. The Council of Piraeus sent it to the Areios Pagos, the Supreme Court, so that it could rule on the jurisdiction. By the time it decided, time had passed, everything that had to be done had been done and there was no longer any need for Sophia to leave Greece. The Supreme Court, as was natural, ruled that the Piraeus Misdemeanor Council was competent. When, after a year and a half, this council decided to reject Sophia's application, the time for the terms of the dismissal had already passed. The unscrupulous judges who brought about Sophia's release from prison did everything they could to harm her, always in a legal way. During this time, we had even visited a member of parliament of the left, Manolis Glezos, who had supported us with his statements when we were inside, in order to pressure the situation to lift the ban on Sophia. Since it was a humanitarian issue related to the political persecution of Sophia, we hoped that Glezos would bring the matter to the Parliament. Did nothing.

In Rhodes, where my mother spent her "honeymoon" in 1953 – In the once European Syros

Sophia continued to bring her mother to and from "Agios Savvas", without anything being done to her. This took a toll on Sophia and I thought the best thing to do was to go on a few trips with her in between hospital visits. So in July 1982 we went for fifteen days to Rhodes and then to Syros. After all, we were planning to take a few trips before we found out about Sophia's mother's illness, so we saved up a lot. We were staying at my mother's house and that's why something like this was feasible. But everywhere we went, we made a great saving by eating only once a day and generally "counting the penny", as they say. However, we visited most of Rhodes’

attractions, although Sophia's mental state did not allow her to enjoy the trip. We even visited the Turkish quarter, where we went to a tavern with stalls to eat tripe. This tavern must have been one of the cheapest in Rhodes, that's why we went there. Otherwise, Rhodes is a beautiful island in terms of buildings.

Me in front of the palace of the knights, the most beautiful building in the old town of Rhodes

The old town is surrounded by a large castle and has many mosques, as well as an Ottoman library (which, because the police disdain to guard it well, has been broken into in the past and many books taken from it).

The old town also has one of the best-preserved medieval streets in Europe. Also a medieval palace with high towers, as well as a building that in the Middle Ages served as a hospital. The sights of Rhodes were preserved, because until 1947 Rhodes, like all the Dodecanese, belonged to Italy, which took care of their preservation. On the contrary, since Rhodes fell into the hands of the Greeks, many attractions ceased to be maintained. A Muslim cemetery, which is outside the walls of the old city, we found destroyed, just as we also found the most beautiful old hotel of Rhodes, the "Hotel of Roses", abandoned and in a bad state. The same as the facilities at the thermal springs of Kallithea, which is located a short distance from

the city of Rhodes. When my mother went to Rhodes in 1953 for her honeymoon, the "Hotel of Roses" was operating, because only six years had passed since the island had passed into the hands of the Greeks. Nevertheless, I think that my father made the best choice for his honeymoon. The city of Rhodes, as well as the city of Corfu, are the most beautiful cities in Greece and for this reason, the prime minister and president of the Republic for about 20 years, Konstantinos Karamanlis, spent the Christmas and Easter holidays for many years in Rhodes or in Corfu. Even for the mere fact that, at that time, the foreigners who roamed the streets and bathed on the beaches, were much more than the Greeks, the island was worth to be a vacation destination.

Syros is also a very nice island. We walked several times up the high parts of the city, which is largely built on a hill, and we also visited its famous beaches by bus, such as Galissa and Delagratsia, which are also mentioned in the famous Rebetiko song "Fragosyriani" by Markos Vamvakaris. The city is full of mansions and has a large municipal theater. I believe that the city of Syros has many beauties, because it is also influenced by the West, in terms of architecture. Until the island passed into the hands of the Greeks in the 19th century, many of its inhabitants were Catholic and had a fairly high level of education. In fact, during the second half of the 19th century, Syros had also been the largest port of the country (of Greece at that time) before Piraeus developed into a major port. In the port of Syros, when we had gone, there were still old factories, out of operation, from the "golden age" of Syros. And Syros, since it passed into the hands of the Greeks, has taken a downward path. Even the high schools established there by the Catholics were forced to close.

Together with Sophia's parents on their last trip to Lefkada

In August of that year, I suggested that we go with Sophia's mother, her father and her brother to Lefkada, so that her mother could see her homeland for the last time. And Sophia's father was sick at that time (indeed when I got out of prison I went and found him having undergone an operation at the "Elpis" hospital) and for that he had taken an early pension. While we stayed in Lefkada, we were hosted by Sophia's uncle. However, her mother's illness, as I said above, had progressed and the woman was not for walks. Communication with her had been reduced to a minimum, because she could hardly speak at all. She spent her day in the kitchen with my father-in-law. My father-in-law sometimes went out on his own to have a beer. If it happened, Sophia and I, to found it out (we who didn't sit at home all day but we also took baths in the sea), we were looking to find him to bring him back, because he wasn't supposed to drink any alcohol. This surveillance and prohibitions broke his nerves, which were already strained by his wife's illness, and that is why he said once to us: "What are you? The Gestapo? The S-S?'' Now that I think about all this, I

tell to myself that we were stupid to be so strict with my father-in-law. He wasn't going to lose himself with a beer or two, which he needed so much while living this drama. But I must admit that, even in this gloomy state, he had the power to retain something of his old humour. I distinctly remember that on the plane we were returning to Athens, he was asking a flight attendant about the pilot, to see if he had met him in the past, since he had also been of a pilot. When the girl asked him in which company, my father-in-law replied that he was a bombardier in the war (World War II)!

In the cosmopolitan Mykonos of nudist beaches, overlooking the windmills

After Lefkada, in September 1982, Sophia and I went for the first and last time to the most famous island of the Cyclades, Mykonos. Fortunately, August had passed, when the island is overcrowded, and although in the evenings there were as many people on the streets of the city as in Omonoia Square on the eve of Christmas, you could find a seat on the buses that circled the island. We were particularly lucky in terms of the place we stayed in, which we found by accident. It was a room on the roof of a two-story traditional house with a small terrace and a view of the mills of Mykonos, the most famous attraction of the island. We could not have found a better room. Being in a central part of the city, we had the opportunity to visit a few beaches during our stay, including a famous nudist beach. Mykonos was known for its nudist beaches and for us it was the first time we swam naked on a nudist beach. We spent the evenings walking through the picturesque streets of the city, which, as I said above, were teeming with people. One such evening, as we were sitting in a tavern, we heard for the first time live Scottish bagpipes, by a Scotsman who was playing to a group of fellow countrymen, or at least English speakers. After all, there were more foreigners on the island than Greeks, I could say. We also were in time to see the famous pelican of Mykonos, Petros, who had been the mascot of the island and died after two or three years. We had seen him in a moorage, where fishermen sat and mended their nets. Although a dry island (I only saw one tree while I stayed there, and that was in the yard of a school), Mykonos was beautiful back then. But I kept wanting to combine "the pleasurable with the useful" and that's why I used to spent some hours in our room studying for an exam that I wanted to take in Panteio, when we would return. Something similar to what I did when over ten years ago, on vacation in Kymi, Evia, I was studying Physics. Even on the boat we were returning, I held the book in my hand and read.

Release of Theodoros Tsouvalakis and his meeting with Katerina Gogou

This summer, Thodoros Tsouvalakis, who was one of my best friends in prison, was also released. Before his release, he "engaged" the public again, going, in the prisons of Patras where he was, on a hunger strike together with Theodoros Pisimisis, Cornelios Louloudis, a very young prisoner, Engonidis, whose first name I do not remember, and the Iraqi who had been transferred with us from the prison of Corfu. Pisimisis had gone to prison in January with a long sentence, for the first widely known squatting that took place in Greece, on Valtetsiou Street in Exarchia. Two others had also been imprisoned with long sentences for the same reason, someone Manis and someone Zotos. They were kept, then, in other prisons. During their hunger strike, I met the sister of Pisimisis and took the opportunity to send some books that Tsouvalakis had asked me to the prison. Pisimisis's sister gave the books to Pisimisis and since then Pisimisis appreciated me, not only for my struggles until then but also for this kind of support! In general, while Tsouvalakis was inside, I supported him financially. I say this because came a time when he acted as if nothing had happened between us. I, at that time, had such a good idea about him that after his release I took him, together with Sophia and Scandalis, to Gogou's house to meet her. This had the consequence, due to some sexist remarks he made about her daughter, Myrto, who was 14 years old then, that Gogou got pissed off with all of us and closed the door on us for a month. It grieves me and I find it incredible that this girl, the daughter of Gogou, whom I have not seen since that time, has already died of an illness.

The end of a very sad story

To Sophia's mother, the I.K.A. (social welfare fund) issued a pension. It wouldn't be issued to her, if she wasn't "with one foot in the grave", as evidenced by the diagnoses, which Sophia presented to the committee that examined her mother. How many such pensions had the I.K.A. issued and it continues to issue? It takes the money from each employer of an insured employee until the employee gets old and, after having been given back to the employee a small part of the money in the form of a pension, the rest remains for it (the fund), because the insured employee dies. This is what the committee of the I.K.A. was expecting from Sophia's mother, that's why it also issued her a pension. And indeed, when Sophia took her mother to "Agios Savvas" again, she was told that there was nothing they could do and that there was no hope. With great difficulty, using some Trotskyist doctors who appreciated her for her struggles, Sophia managed to put her mother in the "Agioi Anargyroi" hospital, in Nea Kifissia. For over a month, Sophia went and saw her every day. Until one day, on November 22, before Sophia went to the hospital, they telephoned us

from the hospital and they said that Sophia's mother had died. On the day of the funeral, I had made an appointment with the sister of Cornelios Louloudis, about whom I wrote above and with whom I had corresponded since I was released from prison. I had already seen her once. This time because of the funeral I left her waiting in vain (the appointment was at the Archaeological Museum). I didn't have her phone to notify her. I saw her again after too many years, after the death of her brother!

This story of Sophia's mother was a nightmare experience for her, because she basically bore the entire burden of her mother's illness alone. Her father was ill and barely moved. I, after so many years in prison and with so much I had suffered in prison, was not in a position to do more than to convince Sophia to spend a few weeks with me on vacation on some tourist islands, in order to somehow improve her psychological condition. I think I accomplished something. After all, it was natural that her mother's illness cost Sophia a lot, because Sophia had not even spent time outside of prison when the illness occurred. Whereas as for me, I hadn't even spent three months out of prison. Anyway, Tsouvalakis and Scandalis came to her mother's funeral a little late, but they had better not come, because a crude and untimely joke of Tsouvalakis about the funeral made Sophia dislike him irreversibly. Finally, sometime, Cain had gone and put some flowers on her grave, leaving a note, apparently for Sophia to see and appreciate. After all, till then he had not completely cut off his contacts with Sophia. He used to make phonecalls to our house from time to time and ask to talk to her.

Christmas Eve at the house of Katerina Gogou - Dimitris Tzanis

This is how we arrived at December 1982. On the eve of Christmas, considering that Katerina Gogou was aware of the issue of prisons, that she had some financial comfort and that she could, as a kind of Christmas present, send a few drachmas to two or three prisoners who were in need, I brought her three postal checks for 1500 drachmas each. Even if she sent the money to the prisoners, my action bothered her and she said me so, so since then I have not approached Katerina again to help prisoners. I helped those I could, whenever I could. It is worth mentioning that among them was a young man under 25 years of age, who had come and met me in my cell in the prisoners' hospital, telling me that he was a friend of Kyriakos Moiras, at the time when Moiras was in the disciplinary prisons of Corfu . His name was Dimitris Tzanis and he was the son of refugees to Russia from the Greek civil war 1946-1949. He was born in Russia. There he first got involved with bad company and ended up in prison. Shortly before I was released from prison, he was in the prisoners' hospital and had told me that those who come out of prison forget those who are inside. I, since I had come out of prison, tried to prove to him that I do not

forget and therefore I supported him as much as I could. We also maintained some correspondence. I will never forget that in one of his letters he wrote to me that the time will come when I too will adapt to society and go with my child to the playground. This bothered me a little at the time, because it was written as if having children was giving up the fight. When after many years we decided to have children with Sophia, I had lost contact with him. I heard about him again after seeing a picture of him in a magazine, sitting dead in a chair in a cafe in Karaiskakis Square, Piraeus, with a lot of blood flowing from his hand. On the round table in front of him was a syringe. He apparently injected heroin, which was adulterated or too pure, resulting in him dying from the injection. This sad end was accidentally immortalized by a painting, which was painted by a friend of mine, Spyros Baziotis, inspired by the photograph in the magazine. This painting, when I saw it at my friend's house, I traded it for an old color TV with my friend, and I think it is the only painting I ever bought.

Winter 1982-1982: Konitsa and Yannena

At Christmas 1982, Sophia and I went to Konitsa. I had first seen Konitsa in 1974, during the six-day school excursion of the last class of the sixth form high school, and it had made a great impression on me. In 1974 in Konitsa there were still shops selling goods for pack animals, such as horses, mules and donkeys, something unknown to a person who had been born and raised in Athens, as I was. Also these shops, like several others, seemed to be relics of the previous century, i.e. the 19th. And several houses seemed to be so old as well. It was this image of another era that made me suggest to Sophia that we go to Konitsa at Christmas 1982. And I think my choice was worth it. It may be that the hotel we stayed in was not well heated, because it was one of the cheapest, and we were cold in the room with the radiators on, but the walks we took outside the city will be unforgettable. In some of them we visited the new bridge of Aoos as well as an old arch bridge just outside the city. The old bridge was considered the most important attraction of Konitsa. On another of our walks we found the ruins of a mosque, something unusual for us as until then we had not seen a functioning mosque in Athens and the only mosque we had seen was the one in Monastiraki, which we had not noticed that was a mosque in the past, because its minarets have been demolished. The trip got even more interesting when one day it snowed and the snow covered the roads. Our walks then took place in snowy landscapes. I also remember that in the central square of Konitsa only one restaurant it was open all days and this was owned by a Lefkadian and his wife. In this we always ate and drank a bulk wine of Lefkada, which he brought from Lefkada and had an excellent taste, although it was of lower than usual alcoholic strength. Apart from this restaurant, we only visited one more tavern, which was in a ravine

outside the town, to eat grilled meat (Konitsa didn't have any post selling souvlaki or other eateries, like pizzerias, shops of cold dishes, etc. at that time). I remember that, out of the whole tavern that was full, when we went, we were the only ones who made an impression on the tavern keeper, because we didn't look like locals. He was impressed by my beard which at the time was black and I was growing it a little long. Since no one else grew a beard, the innkeeper came to ask us where we were from and how we got there. He supposedly liked my beard because it reminded him of Aris Velouchiotis and the rebels of the 40s. Later I learned that Konitsa was the last city that the communist guerrillas of the 1946-1949 civil war tried to take but, after two or three days of siege, they were forced to leave without succeeding. In Konitsa I also saw a sign for the road leading to Kerasovo, the village of my grandfather on my father's side. Unfortunately I never got to visit it in my life.

From Konitsa, before returning to Athens, we went to Ioannina, where we stayed one day, to visit the lake and the small island in the lake with the house where the infamous Pasha of Ioannina and of all Epirus, Ali Pasha Tepelenlis, of Albanian origin, breathed his last... The absence from Peloponnese of the Ottoman army under Hursit, the Pasha of Tripoli (then Tripolitsa or Dropolitsa), which was fighting in Epirus against the separatist rebel Ali Pasha, was exploited by the Christian thieves and armatoli (police) of the Peloponnese (Moria) in 1821, to conquer Tripoli and carry out the first organized genocide in Europe: the genocide of all its Muslim and Jewish inhabitants. The island of Lake Ioannina, apart from the house where Ali Pasha was killed, has other sights that we saw, such as a large building that was then known as a "hidden school". This was the second time I visited this island in my life. The first was when I had visited it during the six-day school excursion.

Kyriakos Moiras back in prison doing a hunger strike: The support movement

In the winter of the beginning of 1983 and the spring of the same year, I spent a lot of time with Scandalis and Tsouvalakis, although I don't remember going with Tsouvalakis to Gogou's house again. I think it was around this time that Gogou and Cain organized an anti-drug rally, putting up a poster that said "The State Sells Heroin" changing the slogan "Cops Sell Heroin" of an earlier poster from the circle of the "International Library". I didn't go to that demonstration. I had learned that shop windows would be broken at the demonstration, and besides, Cain published a newspaper called "The Breaker" and justified the breakings, but that was not the reason I did not go. Firstly, I was disillusioned with the anarchists because of the game that had been playing when we were in and many of them were trying to fit their interest in us into the general interest in prisons, and secondly I wanted nothing

to do with Cain type people. They did indeed break the shop windows, as they had arranged. But I generally didn't go to demonstrations every now and then, because 1982 was the time when Cain called for a demonstration almost every week. I did not feel like a professional revolutionary and my dream was to leave this country and not to engage in politics in this country. However, when at the same time Kyriakos Moiras, together with Fotis Danatos (who had also been arrested with Moiras in 1979), went on a hunger strike in prison, I considered it my duty to stand by. They had been in the prison for a demonstration about the prisons in Piraeus, where a car of someone who wanted to drive through the protesters was broken. With Moiras I had done so many hunger strikes together, I couldn't let him down now.

So the spring of '83 found me again in the streets, specifically in the Propylaea of the University of Athens, where every day there was a mobilization with a loudspeaker, as long as the hunger strike lasted. As part of the support for the strikers, a musical concert was organized at K.A.T.E.,today T.E.I. (technical college) located in Aegaleo and then march through the streets of the city. During the concert I was approached by Nikolas Asimos and I did not miss the opportunity to pressure him to sing too, even though he was not on the list of those who would sing. At first he was negative but later he accepted and luckily they let him sing. To pay back the interest I showed him, before he sang, while speaking to the audience he referred to my own hunger strikes. About a thousand people participated in the march that followed. One of them approached me and asked me if I had heard about the "Panionios money" that Asimos had collected for us at a political concert, which had taken place at the "Panionios" football team's stadium in Nea Smyrni, and then it was heard that we did not see any of it. I told him it was known to me. Sophia had already quarelled with him at the end of 1981, when Asimos was visiting the squatting that had taken place in Valtetsiou at the time. Asimos by that time had become so furious with her that he had grabbed a chair and went to hit her with it. That's why I didn't look for him after my release, even though he supported us when we were inside. Another incident I remember from this demonstration is that, when we were passing by a bus full of people, which had stopped to let the demonstrators pass, someone from a window of the bus asked us if Sophia Kyritsi had been released from prison or was she still inside! Sophia had come out two years ago, approximately. Apparently the guy, even though he was asking the anarchist protesters about Sophia, knowing she was an anarchist, had missed a lot “episodes of the series”.

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

In the context of mine and Sophia's mobilization for Moiras and Danatos, at that time we had met his girlfriend at the time who later became a professor at the Polytechnic University of Athens (N.T.U.A.). Together with her we were often in Propylaea during the mobilizations for Moiras and Danatus. I remember that she looked very combative, but when the Riot Police charged us, after a quarrel between Cain and its commander Georgakakis (as I later learned), she, like all of us, was forced to run. Sophia also got hit by a police baton. For that episode, Moiras' girlfriend commented: "The pride is gone." Many rioters had been chased by the Riot Police that time and quite a few people were arrested. In order not to get caught, instead of running on Riga Feraiou (the road between Propylaea and the National Library) I stopped at a bus stop that had few people, counting on the fact that the cops will pass me. So did a girl, who had seen me at the demonstration and asked me to confirm it. I confirmed it and while the chase was going on in the surrounding streets, I was talking to the girl. This girl, although she was Greek, lived in Basel, Switzerland and was temporarily in Greece. When I heard about Switzerland, I told her that she was lucky, but she said the worst things about Basel, where she was also locked up in a mental hospital at some point. When the chases stopped and things calmed down, this girl and I started looking for Sophia (there were no cell phones back then). We managed to find her, I said goodbye to the girl and I haven't seen her since.

In this period I once saw Cain in Propylaea with a blonde girl who was his girlfriend and I think they got married later and had a child. Some Valentine's Day (February 14th, Valentine's Day) Cain had posted a poster of himself holding this girl in his arms. I was disturbed by this poster, not only because of his self-promotion but also because I thought that Valentine's Day has nothing to do with anarchy. Of course, this poster was nothing compared to a leaflet circulated in Exarchia at that time with the signature "Anarchists" or something close to it, insulting me and Sophia and, I think, Scandalis as well, as Stalinist comrades of Moiras, who had not the right to be in Propylaea and supporting him. From a friend who had been in Cain's company, I had then learned that this leaflet was Cain's. I was freaking out, because no one in the anarchist milieu had cursed us before, nor cursed us after, except him. And because I began to suspect his general attitude with the shop windows breaking, the provocative posters of an abusive nature against state institutions that he often put up at the time, without ever being prosecuted for them, the way the rally was suppressed by the Riot Police in the Propylaea, which I mentioned earlier, and finally the leaflet that cursed us for no reason, when he called my house once more to ask for Sophia, I said to him "Come on, stool pigeon, leave us alone". This resulted in him sending me a typed letter, where he wrote that if he sees me on the street he will "fuck me" (sic), just like any Kyritsis. After that letter he certainly didn't have the face to call again and though he didn't "fuck" me, when sometime later I saw him at

a book festival in the Field of Mars, where he was selling "Spastis", and I approached him to ask him if he wanted anything (having in the meantime sent him back a new letter as unacceptable), he wrote in his newspaper, "Spastis", that we did not supported him in any of his trials (where , of course, he was acquitted) while he had supported us when we were inside. As if it were possible for a man, whom he had threatened to fuck, to support him! As for his support at the time, when I was inside: I would rather have missed it.

Finally, after about fifty days of hunger strike, the president of the Republic Karamanlis again pardoned Moiras and this time also Danatos. However, when he came out, we didn't go to tell him what a struggle we had done for him (Sophia had even written a leaflet for him, at the request of his girlfriend). And I don't know if anyone from his circle told him anything. Especially for Sophia, that time was difficult, because her father had fallen into a diabetic coma and was in the hospital for a month and a half, when Sophia was running in the mobilizations for Moiras. That is, after the Propylaea, Sophia was running to the hospital to see her father. In fact, one night Giannis Scandalis had also gone to see him, as her father told us, and had sat with him until morning. With Scandalis, after the death of Sophia's mother, we had visited her father a few times and that is why Sophia's father was no stranger to him. We were going to see him in my father's car, until one day we crashed and it was our fault, because we went out on a main road, without stopping at the Stop. We didn't get hurt, except for some bump on the head of Sophia that hit the windshield, but the car, after this crash, took the bottom ride, because we found the worst technicians, when we were trying to repair it. They kept it many months before they gave it back to us but afterwards every now and then, I, who drove it from Melissia to Vrilissia without a license, was obliged to take it to a useless car mechanic who had a small workshop in Vrilissia.

The end of a noble man: The death of the fighter Giorgos Argyriou

About a week after his discharge from the hospital, Sophia's father fell into a hepatic coma and was admitted to the "Red Cross" hospital. There, while he was in pain, they didn't give him any painkillers, but they put a catheter in him to make him suffer. When I had gone and found the doctor in charge of the hospital ward, to ask him for a painkiller, he told me that Sophia's father's liver was damaged by cancer and that's why the painkiller would hurt him. I, for the first time, heard about cancer in the liver of Sophia's father and it seemed unbelievable to me, because not long ago he was in another hospital, in "Laiko", where they had done a lot of tests on him and they had not found anything related to cancer. After all, if they had found something, they wouldn't let him leave the hospital. In general, they didn't treat him at all, they just put a catheter in him and poked him, to take blood every now and then for tests, as, stupidly, they used to do each day in a public hospital. Until, after a few days in the

hospital, they called us at home one morning to tell us that he died. It was on May 22, or something like that, in 1983. Sophia was then 24 years old, had already served three years and five months in prison, and had lost both her parents.

At my father-in-law's funeral, no one delivered a funeral oration. It is not customary to deliver orations when the person being buried is not recognized as a great personality by some authority, preferably by the state. And yet someone would do well to talk about my father-in-law. At least his comrades in the struggles he waged against Nazism during the German occupation of Greece from 1941 to 1944 and then against the British and their Greek collaborators who, for better or worse, fought to eliminate from Greece the " communist threat". These struggles of his were recognized posthumously by the organization of veteran resistance fighters in his district. For his participation in the operations of E.L.A.S. against the British and their Greek collaborators he was arrested in 1945 and sent to El Daba concentration camp in Egypt. I remember he had a tattoo on his arm with the words: El Daba.

My father-in-law, first from the left, at the time he was arrested and taken to the prison camp of El Daba

His old comrades knew this, like Tsikourakis who mentions a lot about my father-in-law in the book he wrote with the memories of his struggles against the German Nazis and their Greek collaborators, in that troubled time. Because of his struggles, my father-in-law was the only one of his father's four children who was unable to obtain a passport to immigrate to Canada and make his own fortune, as did his three other siblings who went poor to Canada, they worked, made money and returning to Greece built their own homes and prosperous families. And in Greece they were hired in a company owned by the state. On the contrary, my father-in-law, like my father and his brother Meltos, were never employed by the state and by public enterprises but had to fight for their survival, first as employees in the

private sector and then as small businessmen. This is what my father-in-law tried too, i.e. to do his own work and not depend like a worker on his bosses, but he didn't succeed. His family was forced to look for salaried work, regardless of whether his two children were young. After the war and during the seven-year dictatorship, my father-in-law could not get a passport or driver's license, but the cops would occasionally arrest him from the coffee shop to take him to the Police station, where they beat him. This was what happened to many leftists at the time who had not gone to prison or been sent into exile, but instead of being grateful for this towards the military dictatorship, they maligned it.

By the time he was approaching the age of fifty my father-in-law had already had cancer of the larynx, as a result of which he had had one chord removed, and when I met him, he spoke hoarsely. He had neither a job nor a future in front of him and with a thousand difficulties, due to the fact that the Municipality of Byron passed into the hands of the left, he found some manual work there. All this had embittered and disappointed him so much. When I met him, he was a disappointed man who did not hope for anything. But he kept his humor, thus confirming the one who has said that humor is the cry of the desperate. He liked to tell me in a humorous way about his adventures during the German occupation. At the age of 51 he saw his 18-year-old daughter sentenced to 5 years in prison as a terrorist and when after three years and five months in prison he saw her get out, eight months later he saw his wife suffering from cancer and dying slowly without any treatment, which he would secure if he had enough money. After the death of his wife, being with an insignificant pension, he had lost interest in life. He died aged 56.

On the death certificate, since they didn't look to find out why he died, as they didn't even do anything about his pains, the hospital doctors wrote his admission in the hospital diagnosis as the cause of death.

The detached house in Vrilissia, the release from prison of Cornelios Louloudis and his staying in our house

When my father-in-law died, we no longer lived with my mother. After a late-night fight with my mother, because we were making noise in our bedroom hosting Scandalis and Tsouvalakis in it that night, my mom had told me that from now on, I could only see Scandalis in the coffee shop and not at home, as I had done until then. Considering that I should be able to bring my friends home and that it was unfair not to be able to bring Scandalis home, I and Sophia decided to rent our own house. So, we had found an old and improvised detached house with a garden in Vrilissia and had moved there. The garden was in a mess and it took us many days of work to clear it of weeds. But, in general, the house was convenient for us, because we could bring whoever we wanted. So, after my father-in-law's funeral, in order to ease, as much as I could, Sophia's grief, I had brought home many of our friends. The atmosphere, that evening, was not mournful at all. This, as I later

learned, bothered Sophia and in the future she always accused me for it, not accepting that I had done it for her own good. She insisted that I simply did not account for her father's death

At the beginning of the summer, we also hosted Cornelios Louloudis, after he was released from prison, in this house. We had arranged for him to come to us, even before he was released. While he stayed with us we had a good time together, he even typed a number of his poems on an old portable typewriter of my father. At some point, in fact, his sister came to visit us, loaded with bags of food. Until one day, we wake up one morning and Louloudis has disappeared. Twelve silver spoons that Sophia had inherited from her grandmother from Lefkada and we had them with the other spoons in the kitchen drawers had also disappeared with him. It took me many months to see him again, and he never called to tell us what happened. This made me and Sophia think that he took the spoons. He never in his life admitted that he took the spoons, without ever giving any explanation for his sudden, months-long disappearance.

With the Serifis family in Antiparos, with Sophia's brother in Paros – A very early death

That summer Sophia and I went to three parts of Greece, admittedly quite interesting. The first was the Cyclades, specifically Paros and Antiparos. On the boat to Paros, on the deck, as we were going, we had found my former fellow prisoner Giannis Serifis with his family, who were also going to Paros. This terrible coincidence caused us great joy and we decided to end up somewhere together. We ended up in Antiparos, where we rented rooms in the same house. We spent some unforgettable days with Giannis, his wife and his two children, who at that time had not yet gone to school. At that time, Antiparos even had a nudist beach, which you could walk to from the village. From this beach, we and the Serifis family had at some point rented a pedal boat and we had moved away from the beach, when I decided to take a dip in the sea. This dive was the first negative point in that period, because diving with my glasses in the sea I lost them and had to spend the rest of my stay in Antiparos and then in Paros, without glasses with five degrees of myopia in both eyes, because I stupidly didn't have spare glasses. Of course this was my mistake but in relation to the mistake made by an old friend we found in Paros, and about which I will talk below, it was completely insignificant.

We broke up with the Serifis family after about a week, because we had arranged to go with Sophia to Naoussa, Paros, where Sophia's brother was working as a carpenter for the summer and he would find us a room there. Already from that distant time, in 1983, the Cyclades islands had so much tourism in August, that it was difficult to find a place to stay if you had not booked in advance. Anyway, I remember that Naoussa of Paros had a certain beauty back then, due to its special Aegean architecture, which you find, of course, in all the Cyclades. In terms of vegetation, it is extremely poor, i.e. you rarely find trees in Naoussa of Paros, but this characteristic for Europeans who have a lot of greenery in their countries, makes Naoussa of Paros, like all the Cyclades, particularly attractive! And tourism also creates jobs, at least for the summer. In addition to Sophia's brother who we found working there, we also happened to find an old friend from the group that used to gather at the Spyropoulos' house in 1976-1977, who worked there in a bar. His surname was Gaitanos, and from the time we saw him, until a short time before he came to Paros, he was in France. And he was happy to have found us again after so long and that's why he had invited us to go to a good tavern to celebrate. I had asked him to go to a cheap tavern, the cheapest one, because our money was limited, but he had assured us that he would clear the bill himself. Indeed, we finally went to a good tavern which, from the first moment I saw it, I assumed would be very expensive. Unfortunately I was right and the worst part was that when the bill came our friend only paid for his own! This had made me mad at him and not wanting to see each other again. We never saw each other again. But not because we avoided him but because, a few days after our meeting, as he was going with his motorcycle to the capital of Paros, Parikia, he made a mistake and was killed! That is why I said above that my mistake in Antiparos, in relation to the mistake made by an old friend we found in Paros, was insignificant. Gaitanos breathed his last in Paros. I “ate him with my tongue” as they say in Greece...

In Kavala, at the house of my brother who served in the army as a doctor in "reassessment center"

After Paros, we went to Kavala. We did not choose to go to Kavala because Kavala had a reputation as a city of tourist interest. We went to Kavala, because that's where my brother did the last part of his military service and, because he was serving as a reserve officer doing doctor's duty, he could sleep in his own house outside the camp, in which house we would also stay. The house was a loft above the top floor of an apartment building that had one room and a kitchen. My brother lived in the

room with his first wife, Maria, so we had to stay in the kitchen. The kitchen was small but with a thousand efforts a semi-double divan fit. After all, my brother and his wife ate outside, not in the attic kitchen.

For me, Kavala was the first city in Macedonia further away from Thessaloniki, in relation to Athens, that I saw. By the time we got there by bus and while we were there, I found that, unlike southern Greece, the north was very, very green. The landscape was much more beautiful than what I was used to in Attica where I grew up. Even from Thessaly, which I used to visit as a child. Also, Kavala is a well-built city, with large squares and a fairly long pedestrian promenade on its beach. There were even organized beaches on the outskirts of the city when we went. In fact, Kavala has attractions that you cannot find in any other part of Greece. In addition to its castle, which is located on top of a residential hill located in the center of the city, it also has the only Ottoman palace that was saved in Greece from the destructive fury of the Neo-Greeks: the sarai of Mehmet Ali, who ruled Egypt the first half of the 19th century and his son, İbrahim Pasha, succeeded and defeated the thieves and militiamen who had taken the Peloponnese from the Ottoman Empire, from 1821 to 1825. He had managed to take back even Messolonghi, which was held by the thieves, but the his fleet was destroyed by the fleet of the then great powers (England, France and Russia) and his army was driven out of the Peloponnese, in 1828, by the French army. Ibrahim Pasha, like his father Mehmet Ali, was born in Kavala. Kavala, during the Ottoman Empire, was a very important city and therefore outside it, the most famous sultan of the Empire, Suleiman the Magnificent, had built a large aqueduct, which, although in ruins, is still preserved. While Mehmet Ali, to honor his birthplace, built Imaret, a religious, educational and charitable institution, which is still preserved and we were lucky enough to visit. We also visited Philippi, an ancient city which, of course, is now in ruins, but in ancient times it was the most important city of eastern Macedonia and was named after Philip II, the king of Macedonia. Thus, once in his life, Philip found himself in Philippi. Finally, together with my brother and his wife we visited Thassos, when this island was still green, because after a few years they started burning it too. After this trip, Sophia and I left beautiful Kavala, where for the first time I ate smoked tsiro, an excellent appetizer, and we went by bus to Drama to catch the train to Athens. Before we get on the train we strolled through the town and its large park and found that this town had nothing of interest to a tourist.

The train journey from Drama to Athens, at that time when the railways were not electrified, took so many hours, which we had never spent before on a train. And as if it wasn't enough that the journey seemed endless, the wagon was also full of soldiers who were messing with the people. They were southern Greeks who served in northern Greece and returned home on leave. Throughout the

journey they cursed Macedonia, until a Macedonian passenger on the train, a woman, couldn't take it anymore and spoke with them. It goes without saying that they had nothing serious to accuse Macedonia of, that's why they even accused it of being green. I remember, characteristically, the most annoying of the abusers of Macedonia, when the train arrived in Central Greece, namely in Fthiotida, started to celebrate because he couldn't see any greenery from the windows of the train! It was hot summer and even the greenery had withered out! When we arrived in Athens, I could not imagine that in the near future we would be forced to make a much longer journey by train!

My last trip to Greece after my release, before going abroad: Zakynthos

Our next trip also involved a train. We had decided to go to Zakynthos and to get there we took a train from Athens to Patras and from there another train to a junction near Kyllini, from where we took a train with one, or at most two small carriages, a remnant of another era . We took a boat from Kyllini to Zakynthos. When we arrived it was almost dark and we had not booked a hotel. But our luck did not leave us at this stage. As soon as we got off the boat, a short man approached us and asked if we wanted a room. His rooms were outside the city. When we arrived at his rented rooms it was already dark. He gave us a wooden room, in a garden, incredibly picturesque. The next day he took us to other rooms in the building where there were also the rest of the rooms he was renting. Although he had told us that we could go with him to the city every morning and return at noon, with his car, while we stayed in Zakynthos, we used to go to the city, as well as to the beach close to the rental rooms, by walking. It was September and it was the best time for walking. Although we also swam on the beaches of Zakynthos, which are not the best, we were more interested in the sights. Zakynthos, like Lefkada, has churches of western architecture. It also has a museum dedicated to the "illustrious" Zakynthians of the past, where are the tombs of the most famous, Solomos and Kalvos, which the Greek state has declared to "national" poets, because during the war for its creation, they supported with their poems the massacres and genocide of Muslims. This I had not noticed it by then, although I had read all the works of both poets. In fact, I had written a multi-page paper about Kalvos when I was in the sixth form of high school. This ignorance of mine made me one day when we had gone to the hill of Strani, where Solomon used to climb to hear the cannonades of the siege of Messolonghi in order to be inspired, to take a photo in front of his statue making the victory sign with my hand! It is unbelievable how public education in Greece is blinding the world.

Zakynthos, apart from the museum I mentioned and its beautiful churches, also has a nice castle from where you can see the city from above. I think it is the most important attraction of the island and we did not miss the opportunity to visit it. And one last thing about Zakynthos, the fourth island of the Ionian Islands that I visited (after I had already visited Kefalonia, Corfu and Lefkada), Zakynthos, like Kefalonia, was leveled by the earthquakes of 1953 and all the buildings are new. But they are small and well-built and not like the impersonal apartment buildings with which the Athens basin has been filled. In short, those who live in Zakynthos do not have much to envy from those who live in Athens.

My first trip abroad after my release, together with my fellow hunger strikers inside the prison, Giannis Scandalis and Kyriakos Moiras

The trip to Zakynthos was the last trip I made to Greece that year. I made the next trip abroad. I would not have gone abroad alone, since Sophia had an exit ban until July 24, 1984, if I had not learned that my fellow prisoners in the prisons Giannis Scandalis and Kyriakos Moiras would be going abroad. Moiras had presented himself to the army with the intention of getting an exemption of the military service. However, in Messolonghi where he had presented himself, he had fallen into some thug officers and had to be cut to escape. From Messolonghi they had taken him to the psychiatric clinic of the 401 military hospital in Athens, where they had given him psychotropic drugs. When they finally gave him a two-year postponement of enlistment, he decided to leave Greece, where he saw no future, and go abroad. Scandalis had then suggested that they go to Denmark together, where Scandalis had a painter friend. He had married a Polish woman and had come with her to Greece at that time, where they met Scandalis. Moiras accepted and I seized the opportunity to go with them out from the prison called Greece again, for the first time after my imprisonment.

Thus, in December 1983, Scandalis, Moiras and I, started a journey that, not only remained unforgettable for me, but defined my relations with Scandalis from then on. So, we started by train from Athens to Katerini, determined, from there on, to hitchhike all the way to Denmark! On the national road, outside Katerini, after hours of waiting under an uneven overpass, we were picked up by an Arab with a crashed Mercedes. He dropped us off at the junction leading to the border, having previously asked us to pay for his transport! He justified himself by saying that he had come on vacation to Greece with his family and his car crashed. That's why he was collecting money to fix it and return to his homeland. We didn't give him money, after all, telling him that if we had money for tickets, we wouldn't be hitchhiking.

Another one took us from the intersection to the border, but from the border and above there were no cars, because so much snow had fallen that the road was closed. So we entered Yugoslavia, specifically the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on foot. As we crossed the dead zone between the border stations of the two countries, Greece and Yugoslavia, Moiras found a black pebble and threw it behind him, wishing he would never return to Greece. Unfortunately fate would not allow him to do so. We continued walking to Gevgeli, the first Yugoslav town on our way which, by the way, was close to the border station. From there, since we couldn't hitchhike, we decided to take a train to Skopje. But we knew that while for locals the ticket to Skopje was 600 dinars, for foreigners like us it was 3000! That's why we thought of finding a way to get tickets for locals. So I neared a Yugoslav girl and with great difficulty, because she didn't know English and I Macedonian, I made her understand that we wanted her to buy us three tickets to Skopje. As I had seen her, the girl was good and bought us the tickets. We thus entered the train with tickets for locals. However, because of our clothes, we didn't look like locals, so when the train inspector came, suspecting that we weren't locals, after taking our tickets to check them, he started speaking to us in Macedonian. When he realized that we didn't understand a word, he didn't give us back the tickets and when he left he told us that he would bring the police. I followed him asking for our tickets back and when he reached a carriage with Greeks, I told them not to give him the tickets if they were for locals, because he would keep them. But they had taken tickets for foreigners and that's why they didn't have a problem. I too, at one point, gave up my pressure on the controller and went back to my seat, fearing that, at the end of the journey, we would end up with the police. And it was no ordinary route. It had snowed so much in those days in southern Yugoslavia that to the left and right of the train, through its windows, you could see walls of snow taller than the train itself!

In snowy Skopje on a very cold evening in the company of butchers who were drinking tsipouro like water and they sang

Fortunately, the police were not waiting for us at the end of the route, so we got out of the Skopje station without any surprises and found a telephone booth, from where Giannis called his sister who lived permanently in Skopje. She probably told him that it was impossible for us to go to her house that night and that we would have to spend the night with a relative of her husband. So a Yugoslav came in a car and picked us up to take us to a relative's house. I remember that there was so much snow in Skopje, in those days, that it was over the height of the cars. So, to get your car, you had to dig it out of the snow. It was an unusual scene on an unusual evening.

Because the evening also turned out to be unusual: In the relative's house we sat around a large wood stove and, after a while, some friends of the family appeared, who had probably been drinking out and had come to the house to drink there too. No one knew English, but luckily Scandalis understood some Macedonian and he was the one getting along. However, it didn't take much coordination to drink Macedonian tsipouro. With much fanfare, the Macedonians got into the mood and started singing Macedonian songs, including a patriotic song that I haven't heard since. They put the tsipouro in a glass of water for me, with the consequence that I too became a "fez". But even in the morning, before we left, the man of the house made me drink tsipouro again, thinking that this would help me recover from the effects of the previous night's excessive drinking!

From the relative's house we were taken to Skandalis' sister's house which was in the suburbs of Skopje. It was a beautiful semi-detached two-story house with a garden. That is, the building it was divided in the middle so that two families lived in it. That is, each family took one part from both floors. Downstairs was the kitchen and living room and upstairs were the bedrooms. Also the yard was divided in two. We had found so much snow in this yard that we even built a snowman. We also played snowball fights with each other. And, of course, Scandalis' sister and her husband treated us quite well that day we stayed with them. They also had two small children, boys, who kept talking to us, but Moiras and I didn't understand anything. 34 whole years have passed since then and these children will now have children of their own. I, of course, never saw them again since then, just as I never saw their parents again. Only once did I see them aged in a photo, in an article in a Greek magazine, where they had given an interview about the problems Macedonians face when they come to Greece. When that article was written, Yugoslavia had been divided, after a seven-year war, into eight different states. Since then, Skopje has been the capital of the Republic of Macedonia. This does not mean that Macedonia, which emerged from the dissolution of Yugoslavia, is an ethnically homogeneous state. It has a large percentage of Albanians, who are second only to Macedonians. I saw this with my own eyes the morning we left Scandalis' sister's house to catch the train to Maribor, which is on the border between Slovenia and Austria. We left by bus from home and I found that, on the bus, all the Albanians were sitting or standing to the back of the bus and were very poorly dressed, compared to the other passengers on the bus.

A three men hitchhike in the car of a girl they didn't know from Maribor to Nuremberg!

On the train to Maribor I noticed for the first time that Scandalis together with Moiras were treating me with some sarcasm. It all started with an argument between us about whether the window of the compartment , where we were alone, should be open. I don't remember, after all this time, what I stood for. I only remember that they laughed somewhat contemptuously at me. I was not impressed by their behavior. I had long begun to suspect that they saw me as an outsider because I did not share their positive attitude towards political violence. In my lifetime I have confirmed that those who embrace political violence feel superior to those who do not, just as uniformed men who carry guns feel superior to those who are neither in uniform nor allowed to carry guns. It was in Maribor that I had my first fight with Scandalis, because I reacted to his arrogant attitude. Nevertheless, outside of Maribor, in the morning, we managed and got a hitchhiking that we would never have expected even in our dreams: A French woman who worked in Greece, in Thessaloniki, and was traveling alone, picked us up, three unconventional looking men, with her. It would go all the way through Austria and leave us in Germany. During the journey I sat in front of the car, since I knew the best English and therefore I communicated better than the others with her. And indeed, that evening, she dropped us off at a motel (gas station-restaurant-hotel on the major highways that cross Europe) outside of Munich. From there, with great difficulty, we managed and hitchhiked all the way out of Nuremberg. What had impressed me was that the person who picked us up was a middle-aged German, extremely well-dressed, in a Mercedes, when truck drivers and so many young people with much cheaper cars wouldn't pick us up. To be more clear, I must say that we had stopped at a motel gas station and Scandalis who knew some German, was nearing those who stopped to fill up gas and begged them to take us. From their clothing, age and cars, some of them we considered closer to us and we had more hopes that they would take us than the others. And yet they didn't take us and, finally, the one who took us was someone we didn't imagine. I was already so tired from the multi-day trip that I slept all the way from outside Munich to outside Nuremberg. Nuremberg was also the last place where the three of us could reach together. Hours passed and no one picked us up, so we had to split up and fix an appointment to our final destination, Aarhus in northern Denmark. Moiras, whose English was very poor and he didn't even know German, would go with Scandalis and I would go alone, since I knew English well.

Hitchhiking alone in Germany: A driver who by mistake drove hundreds of kilometers, a car without back seats and an anti-nuclear demonstration

Indeed, these two found someone to take them and later I did too. The one I found was going north, where I was going. But, unfortunately for me, after hours of travel, he found that he had taken the wrong road and turned back from Kassel. He did not, of course, go back so far as to reach Nuremberg, but he went back far enough, so that I could say that we were traveling unjustly for so many hours. The result of his mistake was that he got tired and stopped his car outside some closed motel, turned off the engine and told me to sleep in the car, to continue in the morning. I, since he was a huge guy and the place he stopped was isolated enough that I wouldn't be safe while I was sleeping, I preferred to say goodbye to him and go out to the parking lot of the closed motel, where I had seen several trucks parked, just in case I take any of them. No matter how many truck drivers I asked, no one would take me. It must have been around half past one in the morning when a car pulled up in the motel parking lot with three hippie looking guys in it. They finally picked me up to take me all the way out of Frankfurt which was the closest big city. The car had no back seats and they were drinking beers making quite a fuss. At some point, they even saw a police car and were cursing the police. I was starting to feel uncomfortable with them, until around two in the morning they dropped me off at a fancy motel. It was, as I said, winter and in Germany it was very cold at night, so I decided to spend the early morning hours in the motel restaurant. For economy reasons, when a middle-aged waitress came to take my order, I ordered tea. At the nearest table were some Germans, extremely well dressed, drinking drinks and talking about the weather. But those at the other tables had taken much more than my tea. That's why I didn't feel comfortable. But I couldn't stay out in the cold, begging the drivers all night to pick me up. In order to extend my stay decently, at three o'clock I ordered a second tea. But I could not sit thus till morning, so at four o'clock I went out again, and began to beg the drivers to take me. No one picked me up until, at daybreak, I saw cars full of unconventional looking people, some of the cars painted, pull up at the motel gas station. After many attempts, around eight in the morning, one of them picked me up and then I learned that they were going to an anti-nuclear demonstration outside a nuclear power plant. Of course, I was not in the mood for a demonstration after so many adventures, so I asked them and they dropped me off near the train station from where, exhausted, I took the train to Hanover. I slept all the way, so I didn't see anything of the German countryside that has such picturesque towns and villages.

I arrived in Hanover in the evening. I confess that its beauty impressed me. As when I had been to London five years earlier, I found that there is another world, so beautiful, at least in appearance, that it is worth living in. Unfortunately I couldn't afford to stay in Hanover and see the sights. I got a sausage roll (hot dog) from a traveling waiter at the station (it was the cheapest street food, at the time, a hot dog), drank a beer and continued my attempt to hitchhike further north. . Specifically, I took a tram that ran to the city limits, near the highway that runs out of the city. I got off at the terminus and looked for any motels on the highway, but found none, and at nine o'clock I decided to take the last tram back to the city center to catch the train again. From that phase, the image of the beautiful single- family houses in the suburbs of Hanover with their illuminated windows, some of which also had Christmas trees, because it was Christmas Eve, has remained indelible to me. At that time I considered it certain that those who lived in such houses were happy. And that's why I envied them. Now that I'm older I know that it takes more than a nice house and some money to be happy... Anyway, from Hanover I took the train to Hamburg, hoping that I will see again in my life this beautiful city, which in order to remember I got postcards of it. I never saw it again.

A very cold evening spent walking the streets of Hamburg before I was kicked out of the hotel where I was hoping to warm up

Apart from hoping that I would see Hanover again, when I took the train to Hamburg, I hoped that morning would arrive and by then I would be asleep, which I badly needed. Unfortunately, I was denied this hope as well. The train arrived in Hamburg around 12 at night and from there onwards, i.e. to go further north, there was no train until the morning. And as if that wasn't enough the station, although it was built so that air came in from everywhere, so you couldn't stand, it was closed for the night so you couldn't wait for the morning train in the waiting room. Of course, it was not possible to pass the night outside, because that night it was terribly cold in Hamburg. So I decided to go to a hostel. Trying to always be organized, I had with me a guide of operating hostels in Europe, so I looked for the one operating in Hamburg. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't find it. I could only find a very luxurious building that functioned as a restaurant in a park. In fact, to get to this park I had walked for a long time in the night and the cold. In desperation I decided to take a taxi so that the taxi driver would take me to the hostel address. Fortunately, even from that distant time, most Germans spoke English, so I had no problem communicating with them. The taxi driver, a young blonde, told me that this address was very close and I didn't need to take a taxi.

But I persisted, telling him that I had been looking for a long time to find it. Anyway, the taxi driver, making a few circles till he found the entrance of the park,

entered the park and stopped in front of the building where I had ended up earlier looking for the hostel. In fact, because I had told him that I was looking for a hostel, he got out of the taxi, headed towards the building, found someone and asked him, and came back to tell me that, indeed, this building had been a hostel some years ago, but now it was no longer. So I could do nothing but pay the taxi driver and stay "in the cold of the bath". It was around two in the morning and having little money (credit cards had not yet arrived in Greece) I did not want to go to a hotel. I had to spend that night outside, even though it was a terribly cold night. So I started walking and sometimes going into telephone booths with doors that closed, to keep warm. After about an hour of walking through the main streets of Hamburg, I had reached such a point of desperation because of the cold that, seeing police cars passing by, I begged to be caught and taken to a police station for interrogation, so that I could warm up. But they didn't catch me and so I continued walking until four in the morning, when I entered an underground bar that I found open. The bar was quite crowded and I wouldn't feel comfortable if I was forced to mingle with the gays indide. But luckily I found a seat near the entrance and when the waitress came I ordered, as usual, tea. And after an hour, to prolong my stay, I ordered tea again. But my appearance soon attracted the attention of some guys who were drinking at the bar counter. They were looking at me, commenting on me and laughing, but I, as always, didn't understand anything they were saying, because they were speaking German. I don't know if they were laughing at me, but at some point the waitress brought me a drink and told me it was a treat from them. I raised my glass and thanked them from afar as they continued to stare, comment and laugh. Anyway, at five o'clock in the morning I left and, feeling like a corpse, started looking for a cheap hotel. I went into one that looked like it would be cheap, but I didn't find anyone at the front desk and on the stairs leading to their rooms I saw a lot of trash. This discouraged me and I left. But I found another one, where when I told the receptionist that I wanted a room, he told me to leave and come back after six, because if I got a room before six, I would also pay for the night that had passed. Hoping for, finally, rest and, above all, warmth, I went out on the road again, walked and after six I returned to the hotel. But now the receptionist had changed and the new one, rather racist towards foreigners who looked poor like me, he rudely kicked me out, even though I told him what had happened before. So I found myself back on the road and made my way to the train station. It was already dawn.

By the time I reached the train station I had walked long enough to get a picture of Hamburg. Although it was very cold and I was very tired, I was happy when I was walking in Hamburg in the morning. At night you can't see much from a city, so even though I had spent the whole night on the road, I hadn't realized what a beautiful city I was walking through. But in the morning, I felt really lucky that luck led me to such a beautiful city. Although the day was a cloudy day, and the colors

were not at all bright, looking around you could see such beautiful buildings, such clean streets, so much order and such spaciousness, that you felt that you were in another world compared to that of Greece. In Frankfurt, which was the first German city I visited "from the inside", I hadn't walked, because my hitchhiking friends, the anti-nuclear protesters, had left me at the train station. In Hanover where I had walked, I had walked at night and despite all that it had impressed me. Hamburg was the first German city I walked in during the day. And it had left me stunned by its beauty. In fact, I had the opportunity to walk next to the river that crosses it, the Elba, the river that, seeing it, reminded me that the Roman Empire once reached this far, without ever being able to expand further. And always the route along a river that crosses the center of a European city is one of the most beautiful because, apart from being usually a pedestrian street, like in Hamburg, along the river the rich and the lords have built all kinds of houses and their mansions, to have a view of the river. They have also built many important public buildings. Thus, walking along the river, you are given the opportunity to admire many masterpieces of architecture and decoration. I, seeing all this beauty, dreamed of the day when I would return to Hamburg as a visitor and not necessarily under such bad conditions as I had come this time. In fact, I was hoping to come back with Sophia. Therefore, as soon as I found a post office, I think in the train station, I sent a series of cards from Hamburg and Hanover, and wrote to Sophia that although I was a tired like a corpse, I was glad to be in Europe and that the time would one day come when we would enjoy our stay abroad together. That time came, but I never went to Hamburg again. Sophia never went either.

The fact that I sent many cards from the post office of the station was not only because I was impressed by the beauty of Hamburg and therefore wanted to praise it to others. It had to do with the fact that I had found enough heat inside the post office and, although standing, touching on a bench and writing cards "for hours", I was getting warm. I didn't feel like leaving. When I finally left, until the first train left for the North, for Flensburg which was near the Danish border, I settled in the station bar. As usual, for reasons of economy, I ordered tea. After some time, to excuse my prolonged stay, I again ordered tea. I didn't have to order a third tea, because when the woman who kept the station bar came to collect the cup, after exchanging some words with me, she treated me to tea. Now, what conversation she had with me is another matter, for I did not know a word of German, and she, being of a certain age, did not know a word of English. So when she asked me from where I come from and I answered her Greece, she didn't get it and told me I was from Algeria, since I looked too dark to her. I had a difficult time to make her understand that I am from Greece (Griechenland, in German, which I did not know). When she realized this, she started praising Greece as a holiday destination. I thus spent more than an hour in the bar

of the station. All this time I saw people putting coins into the "slot machines" that the bar had several of, and some lucky people, mostly ladies, winning. And I say ladies, because I only remember women. I was impressed by how they found the desire to "stick" to these machines every morning. I was sitting on hot coals, because I didn't even know what the others, Scandalis and Moiras, had done. I didn't want to get to the house that would host us in Denmark before they did, because I didn't know the Dane. But I had the courage, before taking the train, to call his house to see what had happened. I learned from Scandalis that they had already arrived and that they were waiting for me. We arranged for someone to be at home to pick up the phone when I arrived in Aarhus, to pick me up from the city centre.

The end of hitchhiking in Flensburg – Lost in the snow in Denmark until I was caught by cops

On the train to Flensburg I slept. But again the train arrived at its destination much faster than I had hoped so I could rest. I think it was around two in the afternoon when I arrived. I had a quick ride around town and then, since it wasn't a very big town, I managed to find the highway out of town. So I reached a point where the road that came through town exited at the highway and started hitchhiking. Until it got dark (it was December and it got dark early) I hitchhiked but no one would pick me up. After nightfall I changed my post and continued to hitchhike but in vain. At eight o'clock in the evening I was so disappointed that I decided to cross the Danish border by train. That's what I did and I had the misfortune of being the only one who was asked by the Danish policeman who entered the train for passport control to open his bag to search it. This bag was a bag that my mother used to put in the things we needed when we went to swim in the sea, in the 60's. It wasn't in the right shape for international travel after twenty years, so it made such a bad impression on the cop that he asked me to open it. Anyway, after the border I got off the train and went to the border point where the Danish cops were checking the cars coming from Germany. And in these, as they were leaving, I hitchhiked but no one would pick me up. Meanwhile it was snowing on the border and I was getting really cold. Fortunately I found a canteen, where you could drink a coffee. And there I ordered tea and sat until it was time to close. I think it closed at eleven. The Danish waiter, seeing me not leaving, took pity on me and before closing the canteen he also offered me a tea. He was the only Dane met who didn't speak English. I did not speak Danish at all either.

When, finally, the canteen closed and I was on the road, I went to the border toilets and found that they were heated. This made me stay in them for some time, to warm myself, but, seeing someone coming to relieve himself, I went out again into the cold. I couldn't sit there with the bag in my hands and look at him!

Fortunately near the border there was a Danish town, Padborg, where I headed on foot in order to call at Aarhus, to tell them I had arrived in Denmark. Although it was night, Padborg, because it was decorated for Christmas (it was Christmas Eve), I found it extremely beautiful. Having until then heard a lot about Denmark and the Scandinavian countries in general, seeing so much beauty made me feel like I had arrived in the most beautiful part of the world. But, as I had arrived, I was such a mess from suffering, as I never had been before. Anyway, I tried to call Aarhus from some phone booth but I didn't succeed in anything other than losing all the coins that could enter the slot of this phone device. I didn't have many Danish coins with me. So after the failure, I headed back out of town looking for motels on the highway. The Danish waiter had told me about one but I couldn't find it. Snow had covered the fields, time had passed and I saw gas stations but no motels. And I walked and walked in the snow until, at one o'clock in the morning, a police car drove past me and stopped. The cops didn't get out of the patrol car. They only asked me where I was going and if I had anything illegal in my bag. This bag again attracted the attention of the cops. When I asked them what they meant by illegal, they replied: Drugs. I fell from the clouds and told them that if I had drugs, I wouldn't be back in the snow at such a time with such a bag in my hand. My answer seemed convincing to them and they left.

An hour later I was still on the road, searching the motel in the snowy surroundings. I found gas stations, I found trucks parked with their drivers sleeping, but the motel was nowhere to be found. Fortunately, despite the snow, the cold was tolerable. At least for a man like me who walked for hours. I was a corpse but I couldn't sleep in the snow. So I was walking when the patrol car reappeared. "Are you here again?" they asked me. "What should I do, since I can't find any motels," I replied. "Well then, come with us to the police station," they told me too. And so I found myself in the back seats of the patrol car, between a policeman and a policewoman. In Denmark the cops wear all black, so the only incongruous touch among them was me wearing an olive green jacket. I was holding my bag in my arms. So we arrived at Padborg police station. There they also searched my bag but did not search my wallet, in which I had a fake Norwegian address, to escape from them if they thought I was going to immigrate to Denmark. But they asked me where I was going and of course I told them I was going to Norway. They asked me to show them my money and when they saw what I had 10,000 Greek drachmas in dollars, they said among themselves that it is not a small amount of money for someone going to Norway. After that they decided to let me go. But, so that I wouldn't be found roaming the streets again looking for a motel, they put me in a patrol car and they took me to a motel. In short, I'm lucky that the cops picked me up a few hours after I crossed the Danish border, because I would still be on the road! Of course, for whatever reason the cops pick you up, it's not something I approve of, since you haven't committed any crime.

Anyway, the motel the cops took me to was crowded but luckily I found a table to be alone. As usual, I took tea. But I didn't get a second or a third, because I fell asleep on the table I was sitting on. I awoke at five in the morning to find that I was the only one left in the motel lounge. Luckily the waitresses didn't kick me out. From the Danish waiter treating me to tea, the cops bringing me to the motel, and the waitresses not kicking me out but letting me sleep on the table, I began to understand that I was finally in a civilized country and that they were right those who said that the Scandinavian countries are the most civilized in the world. Of course, being embarrassed, as soon as I woke up I left the motel and headed into town, where I looked for and found the train station. The bad thing is that on the one hand the train to the north would arrive after hours and on the other the ticket window remained closed. A Dane I asked told me it wouldn't open at all because it was Sunday. I had, therefore, in order to continue my journey, to enter the train without a ticket and have trouble. And I had absolutely no appetite for disputes with a conductor. But I couldn't do anything else. So when the train finally came, I got in and sat down. When the inspector came I told him I didn't have a ticket because I couldn't get one being the station closed. He, as if nothing happened, calculated how much I had to pay along with the fine and told me the total. I told him I had no Danish money at all, only dollars. Always relaxed, he made a calculation and told me how much I should give him in dollars. I gave them to him and he, doing another calculation to see how much the change was from dollars to Danish money, gave me the change in Danish money. This story cost me, because I had blistered my feet from walking too much to hitchhike and thus save money, and now I was paying an increased fare, because the ticket office at the station was closed on Sundays.

Finally in Aarhus – The house of the painter

On this train after a few hours, crossing Denmark from South to North and seeing only fields and picturesque towns along the way, for Denmark, like northern Germany, is completely flat and has no mountains, I reached my destination, in Aarhus. As soon as I got out of the station, I found a phone booth to call the house that would be waiting for me. But I didn't want to lose my money again

and so I found a girl and begged her to make the phone call, since, as I told her, I was a foreigner and could not understand how the telephone worked. The girl called but, as she told me, no one answered. I thanked her and, in desperation, took to the streets, to get a taste of the city. I was mad at Scandalis and Moiras for not making sure someone was home to pick up the phone. Taxi money I didn't want to waste, because my money was very little. But, even if I took a taxi home, who would open for me, since there was no one? And yet I had been so many days on the road and had suffered so much. Even the cops had picked me up. Shouldn't they be waiting for me?

So I took the streets and was thinking about the betrayal of my friends and what I would do until I found them, when, suddenly, I see them in front of me smiling. It goes without saying that my joy was great, but I did not fail to berate them, although they understood nothing. So, accompanied by them, I arrived at the house that would host us and met the host, Krul, who lived in the apartment with his wife, a Polish woman, and their child, a five- or six-year-old boy. I would sleep in the living room, where everyone else was sleeping. The bad thing was that the toilet and the bathroom were on one side of the house, where to go you would have to cross both the child's bedroom and the couple's bedroom. Fortunately, however, this old apartment building, where the apartment was, had a shared toilet on each floor. When I had to visit it, I found that, although it was shared, it was extremely clean and someone had left her clogs in there, those wooden slippers used by Northern Europeans. But there was no bath in the shared toilet and I had to cross the family's bedrooms to have a bath. I wasn't bothered by that as much, as by the fact that the bathroom had a huge window with no shutters and no curtain either, so whoever was taking a bath could be seen from the backs of the apartments in other apartment buildings, which luckily were some distance away. I could not, in spite of everything, avoid the bath, specifically the shower because there was no bathtub, after so many days on the road. So I undressed completely and showered looking at the windows of the apartment buildings that were visible from the bathroom, to see if anyone could see me. I didn't see anyone while I was bathing, but even if I did, I wouldn't stop, even if it was a woman. It was not my fault that the window had neither shutters nor a curtain.

We stayed in this house for a few days, but less than a week. The first days I spent inside the house, because from walking a lot, as I said above, my feet were full of blisters and I was in pain when I walked. Krul was a painter and in the mornings he left to go paint the walls of a school he had been assigned, and his wife went to another job. The kid went to a kindergarten or school, I don't remember anymore. Scandalis used to go with Krull, to watch him paint. So I stayed with Moiras. What I remember is that I had found a handheld electronic game with two screens, specifically a Game Boy, before electronic games appeared in Greece, much less computers. This game had impressed me a lot, because for the first time in my life I was able to press buttons and see the result on a screen.

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

I was so attached to this game that one day Krul told me that instead of spending the day at home playing with the electronic game, it would be better if I went for a walk and found a girl. Luckily I had my foot problem to excuse. My leg story had made such an impression on Krull that at one point, when he decided to make a satirical sketch for each of us, he sketched a big head with a small body and a leg that looked like it was in pain for me! My head looked real and because he did it in a few minutes, I realized that Krull was a real painter.

One evening Krul took us out for a walk in the city center, where we also saw a Greek restaurant and felt that Greeks would be found everywhere. I don't know how many Greeks Aarhus had, I only remember that on a wall we saw written in Greek "One but a lion"! It was bitterly cold so we quickly ended up in a bar to warm up. We each ordered something, I the cheapest, and when the bill came, an exorbitant amount by Greek standards, Scandalis insisted that we pay and not each his own, since we were obliged to Krul. I, due to the fact that our money was very little, disagreed, but in the end what Scandalis wanted was done. That night, when we left the bar, I understood for the first time in my life what it means to be very cold. Although it hadn't snowed in the city, the cold was so strong that I couldn't stand it, so when Krul asked us if we wanted to walk home, I said I couldn't stand it at all, so we returned home by taxi.

With the Danish anarchists – We find a squatting to accommodate Moiras

Asking Krul about where to find anarchists we learned about an "anarchist" cafe-bookstore, “Regnbuen A Bogcafe”, which we did not miss visiting. There I met a tall and blond fellow who, together with others, had formed the collective that managed the bookstore. Knowing more English than the other two, I conversed with the Dane and translated to the others what he was telling me. What I remember from the discussion is that one of the main issues facing the Danish anarchists was their position vis-à-vis the German urban rebels, mainly the Red Army Faction (known as the Baander-Meinhof Group), some of whom were fleeing to Denmark , to avoid being arrested in Germany. The Danish comrade had told us that while everyone agreed that they should show solidarity with the persecuted, most did not agree with armed action and urban guerrilla warfare. I asked the Danish comrade to find us some squatting, so that Moiras could stay, since in Greece he was facing a problem with the army. Indeed, the comrade inquired and learned of some squatting where they could keep

Moiras. In this bookstore I met, for the first and last time in my life, an anarchist Eskimo. I talked with him quite a bit but I could not digest that the Eskimos can realize an anarchist society. The image I had in my mind of them was the image of primitives that we were taught in school. An image completely unrelated to the then and present reality. Also, although I was utterly stingy, I bought from this bookstore the autobiography of the most famous anarchist woman, Emma Goldman, which I found in English. I read it after many years and, although it has been written before 86 years, it has not yet been published in its entirety in Greek!

So the next day we went to this squatting. From what I remember, it was a house with a yard and not any big building. There we found various people, young men and women who, learning that we come from as far away as Greece, were curious to meet us. I remember they drank some beers, in small bottles, of a brand which had not yet come to Greece, the brand Tuborg. I was under the impression that they were buying them by the box. They must have been drinking a lot. And, of course, they treated us too. So, starting a conversation with us, they asked us why Moiras could not stay in Greece and had come to stay in Denmark. I replied that he had a recruitment problem and if he stayed in Greece, he could go to jail, and as for Denmark, we happened to know a painter, that's why we had come here. Translating this conversation to Scandalis and Moiras, they got angry with me because, supposedly, the others shouldn't know why Moira wanted to stay there. I answered them, that not only should they not attack me, but they should also thank me, because I struggled to persuade the Danes to keep Moiras in the squatting. But in vain, because not only did they persist, but they began to speak more or less contemptuously of me, as a person unworthy of trust. I then became furious and told them to go fuck themselves (sic). This made Scandalis so furious that he told me then that he would never speak to me again in his whole life. When I told him that he should tell me this in Greece and not in Denmark from where we had to hitchhike back to Greece and I didn't know German to hitchhike in Germany, he said he would do me the favor of going back together in Greece and from then on he would never speak to me again!

The quarrel with Scandalis – The return journey

Anyway, Moiras was finally kept in that house. He would stay in Denmark with little money "and God help you", as they say. Before we parted I gave him some of the little money I had left, twenty dollars I think. And with Scandalis that was angry with me and did not speak to me, I began the journey of the return. Fortunately, outside of Aarhus, we hitchhiked a German driving a small truck who was going to cross the Danish border. The German was very talkative and told us that he was also

communist, something that had made a great impression on us. I remember he smoked “Prince” cigarettes, the same we smoked, but he preferred us to treat him, because ours were Danish, while his were made in Germany, and that's why he didn't think they were so good. This driver dropped us off at a motel in Germany and from there, after many hours of fruitlessly looking by Scandalis, who spoke German, for someone to pick us up, I found some Greeks, who were traveling to Greece in two cars, one, in fact, a Mercedes. We convinced them to take us too and it was agreed that the Mercedes would go in front with me and the other car with Scandalis behind. From what I learned, the second car had just been bought from Germany and was being brought to Thessaloniki, to be cleared by customs, while the driver of the first, Mercedes, was working in Greece as a taxi driver.

The taxi driver wondered at himself for taking us, at a time when, as he told me, so many taxi drivers had become victims of thugs. And as if he did it on purpose, while it was very cold, instead of putting on a radiator during the journey, he put on air conditioning. When I told him that I was cold, he told me that he did it to keep awake, because he was driving for long hours and would only stop in Thessaloniki. Luckily, he was also very talkative and so I wasn't thinking about the cold I suffered. This way we crossed the rest of Germany, snowy Austria and we were crossing Yugoslavia when at some point the taxi driver noticed that the second car was missing, i.e. he couldn't see it behind him. Motels in Yugoslavia were few and far between, so we stopped at a roadside parking spot and waited. It was night and it was very cold but the taxi driver was undaunted. When we saw that the second car did not appear we decided to turn back to see what had happened. After many kilometers we found the second car stopped on the side of the road with its lights off. Inside, covered with blankets, we found the driver and Scandalis and we learned that they had run out of gas and, in order not to run out of battery, since the engine could not work, they had turned off the radiator and the lights and were waiting for a patrol car to pass by and help them. At that time, gasoline from Yugoslavia was bought with a coupon, because there was a shortage, and the amount one could buy from a gas station was limited. The second driver had miscalculated and not taken enough gas, resulting in them running out of gas. While we were talking with our friends, the police car also appeared. They explained to the police why this was happening, told them that the first driver in the Mercedes would bring gas, and so they left. Indeed with the coupons that he had, we went and got a jerry can of petrol and brought it to the second car, so that it could continue its journey. I don't remember if the second car stopped at a gas station below, to fill up, however, once we got to Thessaloniki, they left us and we continued by train to Athens. Scandalis didn't talk to me for three years at least. In the meantime, we had found him in a motel in Greece, as we were returning with Sophia by bus from a trip abroad. Then he was with some friends of his and

we exchanged a couple of words. Actually, however, we spoke normally again after four years, when we found him at a demonstration and he had told Sophia that it was time to make things up again. For the period from the end of 1983 until 1987, when we started talking again, Christodoulos Xiros of the Revolutionary Organization 17 November, stated in his first statement to the Security Police, that Scandalis was active in this organization with the nickname "Count" and participated in a series of its actions. Only if something like that happened, and that's why he didn't want to have contact with me for security reasons, can I justify Scandalis' attitude towards me, from the end of 1983 to 1987, otherwise I don't justify it, because I considered him my brother and I had done much for him while we were in prison. I hadn't done more for anyone except, of course, what I had done for Sophia. Finally, as for Moiras, after six months he was back in Greece with one of his hands in plaster. He told us that he had left, after only a month, from the squatting in Denmark, because he was liked by a Danish woman squatter, whom he did not want! From there he had gone to Holland, to Amsterdam, where he had squatted alone, putting up curtains in an empty apartment. But he was once caught by the police and after being locked up for some time in the detention center, where he did not fail to create problems for them because they had put him in a cell where the white light never went out and this tortured him day and night, he was expelled from the country.

Melissia-Vrilissia and vice versa: The only route where I ever drove a car - Torture of anarchists of Thessaloniki

When I returned to Greece, we decided to move out of the detached house we were renting in Vrilissia. It needed some repairs and we had agreed with the owner, Mrs. Titsa (Panagiotitsa), that she would do them. But time passed and she didn't do them. She was probably afraid that if she brought in builders for building work, they would take so much that they would leave nothing from the money we had paid her until then. I, at that time, had not been forced to learn to do such repairs myself, as I was forced to do later, so we preferred to go to another house, newer and with a radiator, because, it should be noted, Titsa's house had no heating. So we ended up in an apartment in Melissia. As I said above, from Melissia to Vrilissia, where my mother lived, I was driving my father's car, which, after the crash with Scandalis, had taken the bottom ride. Every now and then, I had to take it from Melissia to a repair shop in Vrilissia, where the mechanic fixed it until it broke down again after a few weeks. Fortunately, it was downhill from our house to the repair shop, so I was basically dragging the car. Once, as I was at a stop, a woman came up behind me and hit me. Luckily it did me little damage, because I didn't have a license and couldn't claim compensation. At that time I had already taken driving lessons but I

didn’t have received the license. I had passed the signals test but had failed twice in the driving test. My teacher hadn't told me anything about “oiling” like everyone else did, so after a while we sold the car to someone we knew and I never took the test again and never got a license. I didn't, because I couldn't buy a car so I didn't need it. But I still wanted to get a car one day. The years passed and the wish ended up being an unfulfilled dream. Fortunately, I was driving my father's car from Melissia to Vrilissia for about a year. I would be very sorry to die and never have driven a car. It's enough for me that I've never tried banned substances. Had I never driven a car? I would feel like I never lived up to my time. Finally, the car I drove was, to say the least, a nice car. It was a big car, a white Ford Cortina. The money we got when we sold it was very little, but with it we paid the road tax that had to be paid five years since my father died. The one who took the car, a plumber, was a car lover and made a doll of it. I saw it repaired by him and admired it. Ultimately, however, this also resulted in withdrawal.

We were living in the new house when some students were caught in Thessaloniki after they burned a police car outside the Theological Faculty of the city's university during an occupation of it. From a part of the case file which had come into my hands, I assumed that they had confessed under torture. Just like two years ago, when they caught four young people, three boys and a girl, in Ioannina and made them confess that they had planted a bomb outside the Ioannina Security Police Headquarters, with the result that they spent several years in prison. And in that case copies of their statements had come into my possession, from which I assumed that these young men had also been victims of torture. When the gays from Thessaloniki were arrested, because of the crime, no one dared to support them, or at least the newspapers of Athens did not write anything. This had irritated me, because I thought there should be a reaction to torture, and that's why I sat down and wrote a letter in the newspaper "Eleftherotypia", in which I defended these students, and especially one Petrou who had most of the accusations. I don't know how much this letter resonated, but at least it comforted Petrou's mother, whose son no one was talking about. I found this out from a letter of thanks she had sent me.

First exit of the "couple" from Greece after its imprisonment – The acquaintance with Umberto Marzocchi

In the summer of 1984, on July 23, Sophia's ban on leaving the country finally ended, so we managed to take the first trip abroad together after our release from prison. It had been over six years since our last trip together abroad, specifically in England,

from where we had brought the "Anarchist Cookbook" that had cost us so dearly. We decided to go to Portugal, since there we would be hosted by the Portuguese woman, whom we had also hosted and since then we had correspondence with. But we didn't have enough money to take a plane or a train there, so we decided to go by bus, through Yugoslavia, to Milan and from there by train to Savona in Liguria, where we would be hosted by a great personality of the international anarchist movement and from where we would hitchhike to Portugal. Indeed, we arrived in Savona, a beautiful Italian seaside town, where we were hosted by Umberto Marzocchi, the personality I mentioned earlier. Umberto Marzocchi had been for many years secretary of the International Anarchist Federation and I had corresponded with him since I was in prison. He was a tireless campaigner, with the result that he was arrested in a demonstration in Spain even in 1977, when he was 77 years old, as I had learned from Sophia. When we met him in person he was 84 years old. Despite his age, however, he had very modern views, with which Sophia and I agreed, as long as we were able to communicate with him, since we did not know Italian at the time and I spoke very little of French, in which we communicated. But the mere fact that at this age he did not avoid hosting companions in the apartment he lived in with his daughter and his two granddaughters, Tisiana and Monica, shows how consistent he remained in the idea of companionship.

Umberto Marzocchi in his old age, a few years before we met him

During our stay there we also met another companion, a young man, who took us around the streets of the city. What I remember, apart from the beauty of the city which made me feel like I was on another planet and not the one that is Greece, is a traveling wrestler who was performing in some square. A bulky guy like Champano, played by Anthony Quinn in the movie "La strada"(The Road), by Fellini. Fellini's film

was made in 1954 and then it was 1984. I couldn't imagine that guys like that were still around in Italy!

Hitchhiking from Savona to Toulouse

From a motel on the highway outside of Savona, where a friend took us in his car, we managed to hitchhike an American who was traveling with a friend. When he found out that we were from Greece, he told us that he had also been to Greece and liked it very much. In fact, he had learned a few words because he heard them all the time. When he told us what those words were, I could tell they were swear words. From them I remember "malaka". Hearing these words, which the American had gleaned from his trip to Greece, I was ashamed of my origin. However, we rode a lot of kilometers with the American. We crossed the Italian-French border and he dropped us off at a motel outside of Aix-en-Provence. But there we got stuck for good. We had arrived in the afternoon and it was getting dark and we were still there. I remember myself with a carton writing Avignon on one side and Orange on the other (in French of course) and showing it to the drivers who stopped to get gas at the motel gas station. Sometime I was showing the side that said Avignon and the another time the side that said Orange. Unfortunately, I didn't have any success and we would still be there if they didn't feel sorry for us some French gypsies who were also hitchhiking and managed to convince a Frenchman who was returning to his city, Bordeaux, with his wife and small child, to take us with him. The child, a little girl, was sleeping in the back seats, so we had to squish so as not to wake her. Unfortunately with this driver I had the same misfortune that I had with the driver in Germany, who had lost his way. After driving all night, when he reached Lyon, he realized he had gone hundreds of kilometers wrong and turned back. He had his mother-in-law in Toulouse, so he told us that they would end up there, so he would drop us off at a motel before town. I remember him being so lost that when, after a morning stop at a highway picnic spot where we stopped to rest and have something to eat, we were starting again, he was asking an English couple about which way he should take to go home!

At the motel that the Frenchman left us, we were again unsuccessful. No one was picking us up, so I thought we should get out at the start of the road leading from the highway to the motel. But the police chased us away from there because it was forbidden. Not hoping to go far, we started looking for a car to take us at least to the city. Finally got us a craftsman with a car full of tools in the back where there should have been seats but there weren't. It also smelled bad. The guy driving it was dressed in a work uniform. When we got to Toulouse, he was going, going, and wouldn't stop, even though I begged him to. It took me many efforts to make him stop However, after all that, we didn't have the courage to hitchhike anymore. We decided

to continue by train to Spain and from there to Portugal. But there was a train the next day, so we had to spend the night in Toulouse. So we took a few walks, sat in a little shop that had put chairs out on the sidewalk and looked like a Van Gogh painting, ate while watching a dog missing a leg, and then hit the streets to find some hostel I'd seen in the guidebook with the hostels in Europe, the one I had also consulted in Hamburg and I had been fooled. Fortunately, I wasn't fooled this time, but since I was separated from Sophia and the men's wing didn't communicate with the women's wing, I was worried about how Sophia would get along since she didn't know any French. An environment as if we were in a prison. In fact, the manager of the hostel was a guy, around 40, full of tattoos. Until the next morning when I saw Sophia again, I spent a restless night.

Lisbon, capital of the first European colonial empire, the first decade after the dissolution of the empire

From Toulouse we took a train to Irun which is after the Franco-Spanish border, in the Basque country. I remember we had to go through border control to get out of the city and so we found ourselves having our passports and belongings checked by a policeman who didn't speak any English. I remember him, because when I asked him if he spoke English, he replied that he only spoke Spanish and that badly. At the time I was very impressed that a Spaniard did not speak Spanish well, but later I realized that the policeman must have been Basque and the Basques do not like the Spanish at all and have been fighting for many years to gain their independence. Maybe they are right, because when we took the train from Irun to Lisbon, we crossed the Basque country and I noticed that it was full of closed and abandoned factories. I guess the competition from the Spanish factories had driven the Basque factories into bankruptcy. But apart from closed factories, in the Basque country I also noticed a lot of greenery, which did not characterize the landscape I saw when the train crossed the Spanish countryside. The Basque Country is indeed very beautiful.

We crossed the Spanish-Portuguese border with this train at night. We realized that we were crossing the border, because at a certain train stop some plainclothes police entered our compartment, asked for our passports and stamped them. And in the morning, around eight to nine, we disembarked at Lisbon's terminal train station. A station near the river Tagus that runs through Lisbon, which was more poorly maintained and smaller even than Larissa station in Athens at that time.

We hadn't even left the station when a poor looking guy approached us and showed us something hidden in his palm. I soon realized that he was selling cannabis, which surprised me, because I had never seen this illegal substance sold so openly before. I began to understand that I had again found myself in a different world from that of Greece. This impression was reinforced by the beautiful buildings I saw around me. We were in a huge square, next to the river, Commerce square, which was surrounded by three-story buildings with a series of arches on their facades, and in the background, opposite to the river, there was a triumphal arch leading to the main street of the city. The center of the square, at that time, was a parking lot, if I'm not mistaken. From the side of the square that was next to the river, a huge river the like of which I had never seen before, boats started that for a very small ticket took you to the other side of the river, to Almada.

The Praça do Comércio that we faced, when we left the train station, where he had followed us the one who wanted to sell us Indian hemp

We would also be staying there, and that's why our Portuguese friend was waiting for us near the ticket windows for the boats. Together we took a boat that, all the way, had Brazilian music and made you dream of Brazil. From the coast of Almada we took a bus to go to the Portuguese woman's house which was on some hill. It was not actually a house but an apartment in a complex of working-class apartment buildings that were built like the sides of a square, around a huge open space that formed the surface of the square. Fortunately, our apartment was high up and had some view from its balconies. In this apartment, the Portuguese woman lived with a female friend of hers, Rosario, and their dog. It was a big apartment so they gave us our own room but there were no beds for us and we slept on the floor.

Although we wanted to meet the Portuguese anarchists, we were in no rush to go and meet them. We preferred to get to know the city, Lisbon, first. Although the buildings were not well maintained, as you could tell from their weather- and smoke-blackened facades, the city was extremely beautiful, a genuine European capital. While we stayed there, about twenty days, we walked a lot. When you walk through the center of a European capital city (not including Athens, which was largely demolished in the 1950s and its beautiful buildings were replaced by hideous block of flats), you feel like you're walking into a museum. Wherever you turn your eye, you see something beautiful and therefore an attraction. We did not limit ourselves to walks. We visited as many attractions as we could. First of all the medieval castle which is built on a hill in the center of the city. It has nothing in it from the time it was inhabited, but from this you see the city from above and you understand that it is a city with a long history and to be what it is today, a lot of people worked and a lot of time and a lot of money was spent. We also visited, of course, the cathedral located in a very old district of Lisbon, Alfama, which at that time was inhabited by poor people and therefore its buildings were the most blackened of all. There was poverty then in Portugal. Even if it had colonies until recently, specifically some ten years before we visited it. Even if it had in the past, as a colonial empire, robbed the wealth of many parts of the planet, the most famous of these being Brazil and Angola, countries to which it also gave its language, as in all its colonies. All these five hundred, or so, years that Portugal occupied its colonies, their wealth went to the rich and not to the poor. And the 20th century, in order to suffocate any resistance, the rich Portuguese with the help of the army and the church had imposed on their country the longest fascist dictatorship in Europe, which lasted from 1928 to 1974. Although ten years had passed since the fall of the dictatorship, when we went, even though the socialist party of Mario Soares was in government, we saw small children in the streets who saw us as rich tourists and asked us for cigarettes and money. They didn't understand any language other than Portuguese and that's why it was difficult to get along with them. I remember characteristically, when at some point we were sitting on a bench to rest from the long walk, five or six children surrounded us and asked me for change. I told them that the coins I had had no value to Portugal but they insisted on giving them. They only left us alone when I showed them and they saw that they were indeed unrelated to the local currency, the Escudo. The escudo at that time was equivalent to less than a drachma. Regardless of that, Portugal was then a cheap country for us who had come from Greece. Nevertheless, we did everything we could to save money and stay that way, as long as we could. I guess, deep down, we suspected we'd never see Portugal again. So, for economy reasons, in the morning we drank some soups that were sold in the bars in a plastic cup, and at noon sandwiches or fried meat which was

something like the food of the poor. You couldn't find a kebab shop in Lisbon. But you found a few small shops that cooked pieces of meat in a large pan and sold them on paper, like souvlaki in Greece. And their cigarettes were cheaper than the Greek ones, but they were smaller in size than the normal cigarettes that were available in all other parts of Europe that I had known.

In the city we also visited the war museum as well as the naval museum. We also visited the zoo which is huge as well as the Gulbekian museum which has works of art from all eras, which were collected by a wealthy tycoon, Gulbekian. We did not miss going to the suburb of Belem, from where hundreds of years ago the Portuguese seafarers-conquerors set sail to conquer the world. We did not see the fort located at the point of the port where the sailors used to leave, because it was closed. But we visited nearby the monastery of Agios Hieronymos, which already existed during the time of the conquests and, although its walls and sculptures were also blackened by the weather, we found that as a building it was a work of high art. And when we thought we had seen the most important sights of the city, even from the outside, like the Opera House, we took the train to a city near the Atlantic Ocean, Sintra, which used to be the summer residence of the kings of Portugal and for this it had an admirable palace with a variety of architectural styles, which we visited and were guided through. Earlier we had gone up to the Arab castle which was on top of a hill and from there you could see the whole city. Also, the Arab palace, in the center of the city, where we had to be guided around.

The Portuguese anarchists we met

Until the day came and we visited the offices of the anarchist Portuguese newspaper "Al Batalha!" (To battle!) to meet the anarchists through whom the Portuguese woman who hosted us had learned about us. This newspaper had been published since the 20's but the dictatorship had banned it until it was republished after the all of the dictatorship. In the newspaper offices we had found old

comrades, except for one short, very dark man, who was from the island of Timor and could not hear, because, as we learned, he had been deafened by torture. Communicating with the Portuguese companions was difficult, because they didn't speak English but only French, and my French was awful! But the fellow from Timor spoke English and, since he could not hear, he read the lips of those who spoke to him. Mine he couldn't read, because I had a mustache and beard, but he could read Sophia's. But Sophia's English was not so good that she could hold long conversations. Anyway, we learned from the Portuguese comrades that the only anarchist from Greece they knew was Vlasis Rassias who had asked them and they had sent him their paper. By then he was gathering material to publish a book which he later published under the title "Underground Press". I knew Rassias from

the magazine "Open City", which he published when I was in prison and after my request, he had sent me all the issues, without accepting money. I didn' t know that he was an anarchist. I had ne r seen him

at any demonstration either. That is why I considered that the comrades from Portugal from the anarchy in Greece “had midnight”. The funny thing is, we learned about Rassias from a friend in a suit, a gold ID (bracelet) in his hand and a briefcase. A lawyer. We were surprised by his appearance, because until then we had never met an anarchist dressed so formally.

In Costa Caparica for a sea bath in the Atlantic and to pick up train tickets Lisbon-Athens

Before we left Portugal, since it was also summer, we thought of going for a swim. So one day we took a bus from Almada and went to a beach on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean where people bathed, Costa Caparica. But we didn't actually bathe, we just got our feet wet, because the water was very shallow, it reached up to the knees up to a few hundred meters from the land and, beyond that, you could see in front of you a wall of water that must have been over two meters. A phenomenon that I had never seen before, nor have I ever seen again in my life. This beach ended at a wall parallel to the coastline, above and parallel to which there was a road and a sandy beach, where you could see a bunch of sheds with chairs and many street vendors with their kiosks. By five in the afternoon the sea had reached as high as this wall and the beach had disappeared under the water.

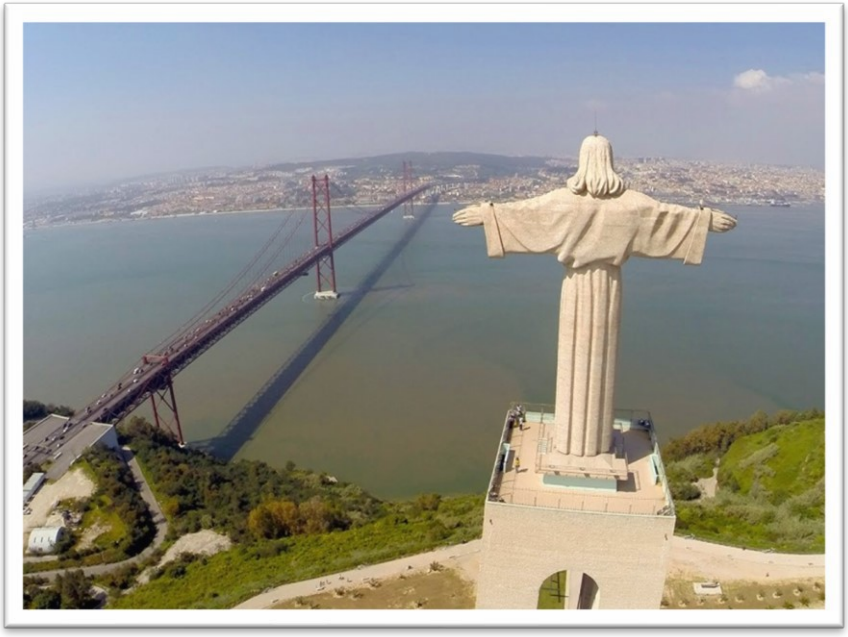
We went to Costa Caparica again, but not for swimming. The story went like this: I had two $100 bills with me, which I left in our room when we went out to explore the city. One fine day I found that one was missing. I assumed that the host or her friend stole it from me, but I was afraid to tell her, lest she kick us out of the house. My suspicions grew when, from the day we lost the $100, the Portuguese woman's behavior changed and became quite defiant. I distinctly remember that, the day we found out the $100 bill was missing, coming home from outside we had two sandwiches with us to eat at home. When we went to the kitchen, we found the Portuguese woman eating some soup with a friend of hers and she told us to eat too. When we sat down to eat the soup, he took the sandwiches we had on the table and gave them to a dog which she had, telling us that since we were eating the soup, we didn't need them. We suspect the Portuguese for the reason, also, that she was the daughter of a policeman, whom she had already introduced to us, as well as all her family, in a diner they offered to us, and therefore it would be difficult for her to be prosecuted for any offense of this kind. So we didn't talk about the $100 and I called my brother to send us Lisbon-Athens train tickets, because, after the hundred dollars which disappeared, we didn't have any money to go back to Greece. My brother sent them to the address where we were staying but the Portuguese woman left us and went on holiday, without giving us the key to her mailbox, even though we had asked her to. She left it to her friend Rosario. We, the way things had developed, were afraid that if the tickets reached the mailbox, Rosario could pocket them and then, we would be lost. That's why we asked where the central post office

of Almada is, so we can go and get them directly from there. We were told it was in Costa Caparica so we went back to Costa Caparica one morning before the post office opened to prevent the giving of the letter with the tickets to the postman. But since we had arrived an hour earlier than the eight that the post office opened, we had gone for a walk and returned at eight. But in front of us we found a huge queue waiting for the post office to open. As we approached, a woman told the others that she had seen us earlier when we had arrived first and, something incredible by Greek standards, the whole queue accepted for us to go in front. And, luckily, the letter with the tickets was in the post office, so our hearts finally went back to where they left off, when we saw the hundred dollars bill missing.

From the house we stayed, I will not forget, not only the story with the hundred dollars bill, but also the dog and the refrigerator. This dog, a medium sized cinnamon colored and very calm, was the first dog I ever saw eat his own poop. As for the fridge, it was the only fridge I ever saw with a lock! From this alone one can understand how defiant the Portuguese woman's action was to give the sandwiches we had bought to the dog. I mean, since the fridge had a lock, the Portuguese woman would understand the value of food.

From this city, among others, I will not forget a huge statue of Christ with open arms, which is on a very high pedestal, so big that it can fit an elevator for tourists who want to visit the statue. From the top of the pedestal, i.e. from the base of the statue's feet, we saw Lisbon and the surrounding countryside from a great height, as well as the huge river, the Tagus, which after several kilometers beyond the city flows into the Atlantic. Above the Tagus there is a huge bridge at the height of the city, which, as we learned, was built by the dictator of Portugal for many decades, Salazar, to immortalize his name. We had made nice slides with this bridge in the background, so I still remember it. Even from the city I will not forget something else. Bad this time: That the port road that is parallel to the sea and stretches for kilometers, with factories and warehouses along it, it smelled like piss. We also walked this road for some kilometers and that's why I remember it.

With Sofia in Sintra, a city with an Arab palace in the city center and a "fairytale" palace, the summer residence of the kings of Portugal, on top of a verdant hill.



The statue of Christ on the towering pedestal from where we gazed at Lisbon from above and the bridge that goes over the Tagus.

The great journey of the return begins – The museums of Madrid and Guernica

When we finally got on the train, we were all happy, because we hadn't run out of money at the "end of the world". And Portugal may not be the end of the world, but for my own life, its seaside town, Costa Caparica, was the most westerly place I've ever visited in my life. Kind of the edge of the world for me. After all, the ancient Greeks also believed that the world, to the west, ends at Gibraltar, where they believed that the Heraklion Columns existed. Portugal is northwest of Gibraltar. And we were not only happy because we were returning safely to Greece. We were happy because we would see so many places until we reached Greece. At length the journey began to become very tiring, for it dragged on for a long time, but then we were still at the beginning.

Traveling all day and all night we arrived the next morning in Madrid. From there there was no train to go north except at night. In the evening a train left for Barcelona. I thought it would be too tiring, after a whole day on the train, to go back until the evening in the streets of Madrid, so I suggested to Sophia that we visit its most famous museum, the Prado, which is one of the most famous museums of the world. And indeed, the Prado Museum is so big, that by the time we finished our visit to it, it was late afternoon. What I remember from the courtyard of the museum is that there, for the first time in my life, I saw water bottles being sold, and that irritated me. Until then I had never in my life paid for the water I drank outside the house and it pissed me off that in Spain I even had to pay for water. From our visit to the museum, what I remember most are the paintings of Domenikos Theotokopoulos, known as El Greco, because they were huge, i.e. reaching up to two meters in height and more. I wasn't used to seeing such huge paintings. It goes without saying that El Greco's paintings were not the best. In the Prado there are paintings by great Spanish painters, such as Murillo, Velázquez and Goya, which may not have impressed me with their size, but they were not small, like the ones I saw hanging in living rooms in Greece. I hadn't been to the National Gallery of Greece yet. I can say that, until I went to Prado, I was also unaware of its existence.

When we left the Prado after many hours, we saw that in an adjacent building some of Picasso's paintings were exhibited, including his most famous, Guernica. We didn't miss the opportunity to go see it too, so we bought new tickets for the museum with works by Picasso. What impressed us was not so much the painting, which is also huge, about three and a half by eight meters, and how unusual it was with so many distorted figures in obvious agony, as the people who had sat before it, I think on the floor, and were looking at it for hours. There must have been more than fifty people, and seeing so many people sitting still and looking at a painting for hours, was something that had never happened to me before in my life. The room was also dark and this added to the mystery that caused this spectacle. It goes

without saying that Sophia and I did not sit down to look at Guernica for hours, after all, I was also unaware of the history of this painting at the time. We simply went, as near as we could, from the corridors left to its left and its right by the seated crowd, and cast a few more glances than we usually cast at paintings. After all, we couldn't even get very close to the painting. In front of it was a huge glass wall that started from the floor and reached the ceiling.

From Madrid to the city where in the past the anarchist movement reached its peak: Barcelona

So, that's how we spent our day in Madrid and in the evening, at eight I think, we got on the train for Barcelona. We thought we would arrive in a few hours but, in the end, it took us a full 15 hours. And that's because, when the train went out into the fields, every now and then it stopped, without being at stations, and it took a long time before it left again. We were very impressed by this phenomenon and, as we learned from Spanish fellow travelers, that's what the train from Madrid to Barcelona did every time, and that's why the people traveling weren't impressed. With such a train, when we arrived in Barcelona it was noon.

The first thing that impressed me in Barcelona was its central train station, the Sands station. It was a huge, ultra modern and luxurious station, the likes of which I doubt I had ever seen before. And yet the idea I had then of Barcelona, that it was the city where anarchists put into practice their ideas of a classless society, more than they did at any other city in history, did not seem to fit with the reality. In particular I could not imagine that anarchists had so much influence in such a rich city a few decades ago. Badly, of course, because on the one hand I did not consider that almost fifty years had passed since the anarchists had influence in Barcelona and on the other hand I had the wrong idea that the anarchist movement appears where there is poverty and not in a state with developed industry. I was definitely influenced by the populism of communist propaganda, which I had "eaten with a spoon", while I was in Greece. A populism that is summed up in the slogan "Bread-Education-Freedom", as if the Greeks at that time had neither bread to eat, nor schools to send their children to and even for free. As for, finally, the freedom claimed by the communists, that freedom was the police state of a party dictatorship, as was then (1984) the Soviet Union and its satellite states in Eastern Europe.

Of course, the Sands station could be a showcase project, like the big projects that dictators are used to doing, to leave their memory in history. And yet it wasn't just the Sands station that made me feel like I was in a very rich European city. All of Barcelona looked rich, at least compared to Lisbon and Madrid, not to mention Athens which is the ugliest European capital. Even the city's Metro had many lines,

at the time when there was only one line in Athens, the Piraeus-Kifisia line. All this wealth that we saw around us, created the need for us to walk the city and stay at least one night, because when would we be given the opportunity to see it again? So, with the help of the guide I had with me, we found a hostel and left our things, so as not to carry them with us. First we went to the central point of the city's port, where next to the dock there is a huge column, to remind us that it was from there that Columbus set sail with his fleet and discovered America. We then headed downtown. We found a huge square without benches but with wicker chairs, like those that the gypsies repair in Greece. Being tired from walking, we decided to sit and rest. But we didn't have time to sit down and a middle-aged man with an official cap and a hand-cranked ticket machine appeared and asked us to pay a ticket because we were sitting on the chairs. We were speechless, because something like this had never happened to us before and we didn't expect Barcelona, where anarchists had once prevailed, to be so inhospitable. Of course we got up and left, even though the ticket was small. We had considered it an insult to our dignity to pay a ticket to sit in a public square. And we didn't go anywhere else to sit. We walked all the time and, today, I'm impressed that we didn't get tired from walking so much. We looked to see any anarchist posters, since at that time anarchists were no longer illegal. But we saw nothing. Even posters, in general, were few and far away on from the other, in the city. We also tried to see the Barcelona Cathedral, but it was getting dark and it was closed. But even at night, looking at it from the outside, you could tell it was impressive. Also extremely beautiful was the city's main post office, where we went to post Barcelona cards to family and friends. In the post office, as in other public buildings, what had impressed us was that they were guarded by soldiers with automatic weapons in their hands, as if in Spain there was still a dictatorship. It must have been the "Militia" that the dictator Franco and his descendants had no desire to abolish, which had proved so effective in policing. Now they had a new cause to justify its presence: The "terrorism" of ETA, the Basque guerrilla organization that fought for the secession of the Basque country from Spain and the creation of a separate Basque state.

After the post office, we returned to the hostel, because the nuns who managed it had told us that the door was closed at 11 pm and if we returned later no one would open for us and we would be left outside. The guesthouse also resembled a prison. The women were in a separate building from the men and there was no possibility of communication between men and women. So I said goodbye to Sophia and we made an appointment for the next day in the courtyard of the hostel. The hostel room I ended up in, not only had about twenty bunk beds that were almost all full, but there were no sheets on each bed. I think that night I was not covered with anything. And I slept only a few hours, because in the city they were celebrating some festival and they were making a lot of noise, even at night.

From Barcelona to Genoa, gazing from the train at the famous cities of the French "Côte d'Azur", where the rich from all over the world live in luxury and opulence

In the morning we took the train to France. The route was coastal and very beautiful. The hotels and beaches were endless. And we are talking about luxury hotels, not like the ones we were used to seeing in Greece. I remember that there was only one other person in the carriage we were in, who started talking to us in fluent English and told us that he was from Barcelona. Learning that we knew about the anarchist past of the city, he told us that his father was also an anarchist, but he was not involved in politics except with sports. When we arrived at the Franco-Spanish border, we were not checked at all, but we could not continue the journey directly. We had to get off at the French border town and wait for a few hours until we got the next train that would take us to Italy. From those hours what I remember was a Frenchman sitting with a guitar on the floor of the station, improvising, until the police came and told him to leave. He did not leave by telling them that France is a free country and they had no right to expel him. They finally left him there. I also remember a nice red wine we got from the supermarket and drank. French wines are among the best and in France we found them cheap. That's why we didn't miss an opportunity to drink a bottle. We had done the same in the Basque country, when we stopped in our journey to Portugal. And there the wines are both nice and cheap. Not like the wine my father and Sophia's father drank until they died, the retsina "Mesogion". And they even bought the retsina in bulk. I don't remember bottled retsina being popular back then.

The train journey from the Franco-Spanish border to Genoa, Italy, was quite interesting, because the route, for many kilometers, was coastal. So we were given the opportunity to see, at least from the train windows, two of the most famous beach cities in France, Nice and Cannes, as well as Monaco, and Monte Carlo in Italy. What struck me about them was that they had very tall buildings and seemed extremely densely populated. Their harbors were filled with thousands of yachts. This sense of size I think can only be perceived by people who have lived on the periphery of Europe, such as the Greeks, or by those who come from developing countries in Asia and Africa. I, looking at these famous cities, did not imagine that I would never see them again. When you are young, you think that not only do you have almost unlimited time ahead of you, but also that it is easy to find money to fulfill your desires, when they are not excessive.

Back in Savona - Giovanni Baldelli, author of "Social Anarchism" and the book "Il tramonto del diritto panale" - The return to Greece

From Genoa we took the train and went back to Savona, to see Marzocchi. At Marzocchi's house we had the opportunity to meet Giovanni Baldelli, who was a friend of Marzocchi, also of old age and with a long tenure in the International Anarchist Federation. Baldelli lived permanently in England, where he taught at a school, and therefore knew excellent English. So he acted as the translator between us and Marzocchi. Some time later I found in England and took his book "Social Anarchism" which he had written in English. Then, at Marzocchi's house, he had not told us anything about this very interesting book of his. Instead another friend of Marzocchi, whom we met at his home, not only told us about the books he published as a publisher ("Volcano") but also gave us one, "Il tramonto del diritto penale" by Luigi Molinari, which I translated after some years and I managed to print it. I don't remember the name of this fellow, I only remember that from Greece what he found most interesting was "Metaxa" cognac. Unfortunately, neither he nor Marzocchi nor Baldelli I saw again since then. Marzocchi and Baldelli died two years later.

From Savona we returned by train to Genoa and from there we took a train to Venice. We could only take a train to Greece from Venice. During the journey we had the misfortune to find ourselves in a carriage full, where at least two persons were smoking Indian hemp. And not only did we get the smell of cannabis, but one, a tall Italian, had taken off his shoes and spread his feet on the seat opposite and they stank. Fortunately, after a few hours we arrived in Venice. The train station of Venice, from where we would take the next train, is located in the old town, so as soon as you exit the station, you can see the canals of Venice, an impressive sight. After all, the station is located on one of the islands that make up Venice, which is joined to the mainland by a very long bridge, which the dictator Mussolini had built, as he did with the imposing central railway station of Milan, hoping to go down in history as politician who did great works. And we were seeing Venice for the first time. It was so beautiful that we could not say that until then we had seen another city that surpassed it in beauty. But we were not given the opportunity to move away from the station. The train that would leave for Greece would not be late. But our luck would be such that we would see Venice again after a few weeks, as we will see below.

I don't remember anything more about the journey from Venice to Greece than that it was endless (Yugoslavia was a big country) and that at every station a lot of people entered with a lot of luggage. Our compartment in the wagon was filled and emptied every now and then. The bad thing was that these people, the Yugoslavs, were very noisy. And the noise and mess you can ignore when it lasts for a few hours, but not when it lasts for more than 24 hours. The train must have taken over 24 hours to cross Yugoslavia. After all, Sophia and I had already been on the road for many days, since we had left Lisbon. Anyway, finally we reached the Greek border, where the cops always do the most checks than at any other border of a European country I've visited. And after a few hours we arrived in Thessaloniki, from where we continued on the same train to Athens. When, after many hours, the train reached Athens, because it was too long by Greek standards, its rear carriages, when it stopped, were far away from the platform of the station. I remember some girls from abroad who, seeing that the train had stopped for a while, asked us if we had arrived in Athens, because they did not see any sign anywhere and not even a station platform. We were happy anyway. We had spent a week or so on the road changing trains and we were tired. That's why we were happy that we had finally reached our destination. This was for me and Sophia the longest journey we have ever taken by train. After all these years, because the memory takes care to keep, as much as it can, the good moments and not the bad, I dare to say that this journey, as tiring as it was, was worth it.

I don't remember anything from the summer of 1984 in Greece. Perhaps because, shortly after our return, we were informed that an "International Anarchist Meeting" (as its organizers called it) would take place in Venice in September, and we again began to prepare for a trip abroad. This year was chosen for the meeting because of George Orwell's famous novel "1984", where Orwell presents in a literary way the regime of terror that the Bolshevik party had imposed on Russia when Stalin was the head of the party. This meeting would last a week and the organizers would have taken care of securing accommodation for the participants. For me and Sophia, it would be a very good opportunity to get to know this beautiful city, Venice, which we had only seen from its railway station.

The International Anarchist Meeting in Venice in 1984

So in September 1984 we were again in Venice for the meeting of anarchists from all over the world. I don't remember how we traveled to Venice, certainly not by plane. The airplane, at that time, was the most expensive means of transportation and that's why we didn't use it at all. But I remember that when we arrived in Venice, we went straight to the square, which the Municipality of Venice had given to the anarchists, to set up an open-air kitchen, tables and food stalls, as well as exhibition tents. There one could also find the organizers and ask about accommodation. When we asked about accommodation, we were told that so many people had come to the meeting, that all the accommodation was full and they had nowhere to put the extra people. This information was very unpleasant for us, because we had no money for a hotel and the guesthouse in Venice was full. But fortunately we were very lucky, because Marzocchi's granddaughters, Tisiana and Monica, who loved us and made sure to find us comrades to host us, had come to the meeting. And the comrades who found us, they may not have had a house in Venice, but they had in Treviso, which is a quarter of an hour from Venice by train, and they were excellent people. They were Loris Zoffoli and Katerina Spinella. We didn't ask them how to pronounce their last names, which we learned from the doorbell of their house. They were a couple without children and were both teachers. In addition to us, they also hosted a girl from Yugoslavia, a comrade, who had also come for the meeting. We had been given the room where Loris had his office, and we slept in its floor, in the sleeping-bags they had given us. They didn't know a word of English or French and we, at that time, didn't know a word of Italian, apart from the Italian words that have been naturalized in the Greek language. Nevertheless, Loris was so expressive that even with the little French he could understand because French is somewhat close to the Italian language, we got along. However, from that time I began to feel the need to learn Italian, the language which, because of its pronunciation, is the easiest foreign language for a Greek, if he wants to learn it.

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

Me and Sophia with Monica in the middle, Marzocchi's granddaughter, in front of the makeshift restaurant set up by the organizers of the 1984 International Anarchist Meeting.

On a bridge in Venice, the Italian comrades who hosted us, Loris on the left and Katerina on the right. In the middle, Antonio Tudino, a Venetian comrade, and Sofia.

Loris and Katerina introduced us to another companion, who was from Venice and was staying with his sister. His name was Antonio Tudino. During the entire time that the meeting lasted, we only hung out with Loris, Katerina and Antonio, although in the square, where they were selling food, we also met other Greek anarchists who had come for the international meeting, such as the publisher George Garbis with his girlfriend Vasso, Michalis Protopsaltis with his girlfriend Irini Lazana, George Hampas who at this time was publishing the magazine "Arena", in which Panagiotis Kalamaras also collaborated, who was also a speaker at the meeting, as well as our friend the transvestite Paola.

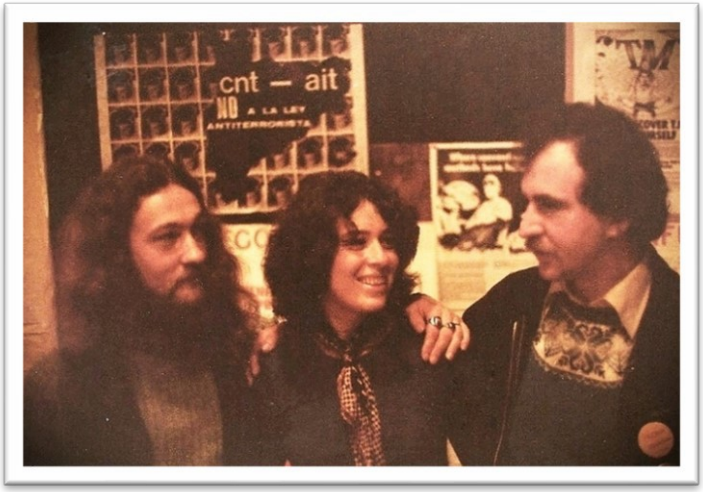
The presentations and discussions of the meeting took place in the halls of the School of Architecture of the University of Venice. There were interpreters in two or three languages who translated the speakers as they spoke, and you could listen to the translation with headphones that you put in your ears. Kalamaras spoke in English and not in Greek. What I remember from his speech is that he presented PA.SO.K., which was then in government, as a party that had made significant changes in all areas and had made Greece a modern democratic country. As if he had been a member of PA.SO.K. ...

We went to the presentations every day and happened to hear some interesting presentation, among the many that did not touch us. It was by the famous American anarchist Murray Bookchin, who argued that feminism is directly related to anarchism and that anarchists should take lessons from feminist groups operating without authority. We later met Murray Bookchin in person, completely by chance.

Our acquaintance with the famous anarchists Stuart Christie, Albert Meltzer and Murray Bookchin

In particular, at the meeting I met the famous Scottish anarchist Stuart Christie, who had spent some years in Spanish prisons accused of participating in an assassination attempt against the fascist dictator Franco, and about a year and a half in English prisons, accused of participating in the "Angry Brigade" guerilla organization. Finally, in England, he was acquitted in the court that had taken place after such a long time that he had been under trial. Christie, when I was in prison, had sent me free books and periodicals that he was publishing at that time, having founded the publishing house "Cienfuegos Press", and I, when I was released, had sent him, at his request, information about the action of the fascist groups in Greece during the dictatorship and later, to include them in his book about the "black terrorist" (i.e. fascist) Stefano Delle Chiae. So I waited, when published the book, for him to send it to me. But he didn't send it to me and I had to buy it in Venice, where I saw it being sold at the anarchist book stalls in the square. So when I bumped into Christy and we met, I complained to him. He then offered to give me the book, but I told him I

had already bought it. But I had the brilliant idea to interview him. But I didn't have a tape recorder and I learned that Paola had a tape recorder, and even a journalistic one. So we went and found her at the table of a cafe, where many people were sitting, including Garbis. I interrupted their conversation to ask for the tape recorder. Only then did I realize that the tape recorder was on and they were interviewing Bookchin. Due to my own intervention, the interview was interrupted but the tape recorder was not given to me. Then I met Bookchin, as he got up with the others to leave, and I learned that, at the time Sophia and I were in prison, he was collecting signatures from the professors of American universities to support us. Of course, I was moved when I learned that we had the most famous American anarchist of the 1970s on our side, as I read him being called in an American book of the time.

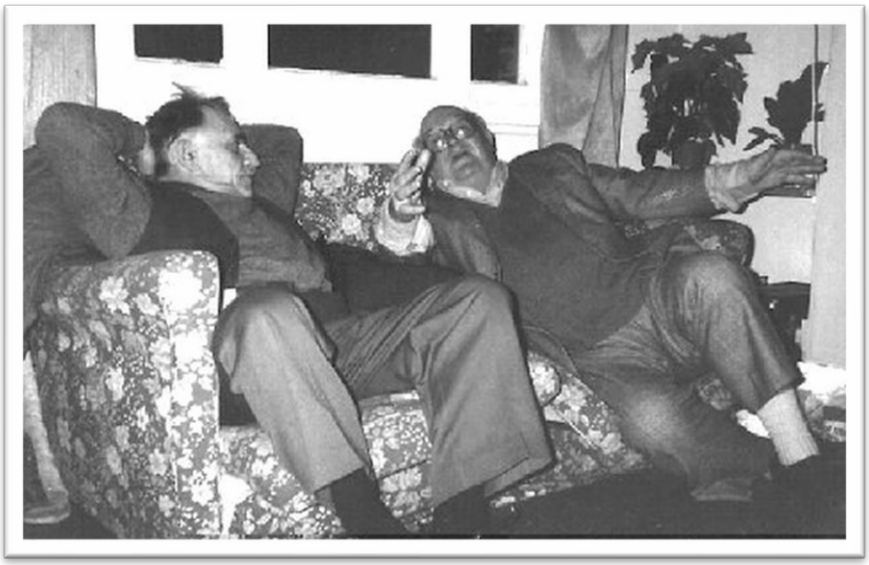


On the right, Stuart Christie, as he looked when we met him

I may not have interviewed Christie, as I did not secure a tape recorder, but I did interview without a tape recorder the famous English anarchist Albert Meltzer, whose two books I had read in Greek, long before I met him. I gave this interview to George, Garbis, and he published it in the magazine he was producing with others at the time, "Anarchos".

But I confess that I am not sure that I understood some parts of the interview correctly. Meltzer's English, who then was already in an advanced age, was difficult even for English comrades, as I later learned. Together with Meltzer, I also met a girl from Australia who lived in London, Margaret. I would see her again, as I would see Meltzer after a few months. However, I agreed with Meltzer on one thing: That the meeting was worthwhile not for its lectures, but because it was an opportunity to make international contacts, getting to know up close people who I only knew through their work or had some correspondence with. Also, from the books Christie had sent me, I later translated "The Struggle to be Human, Crime, Criminology and

Anarchism".Although this was printed 30 years later, for the last ten or fifteen years before it was printed I had, at least, uploaded it to the web.



Albert Meltzer on the right and Murray Bookchin on the left, probably a few years after we met with them

Moreover in Venice I saw again the Danish comrade I had met in the anarchist cafe-bookshop in Aarhus, Denmark. Specifically, he had found Greeks at the meeting and having met me a few months ago, he asked them about me. So they came and told me that some Danes were looking for me. The Dane gave me a long text he had compiled and introduced me to a Norwegian friend. This last one, as well as the Norwegian anarchist pamphlet he gave me, I did not like, because with what he said, he gave the impression that in Norway the regime was so free and democratic that we could talk about a communist society. I knew Norway as a capitalist country and not a communist one.

Although we had been coming and going for a week in Venice, and had walked a great deal about it, especially in the evenings after the talks were over, we did not get acquainted with it, and were always ready to get lost. I can't say it's an easy city to navigate. Because it is made up of islands, there are no roads for cars. And only one road leads from the train station to the main square, Saint Mark's Square. All the other roads run parallel to the canals and are interrupted by small

bridges. That is why transportation between the various parts of the city is done by gas boats, or gondolas for the rich who use them as taxis. We didn't get to know the city, because we went everywhere with Loris, Katerina and, often, Antonio. I learned about the city after many years, when I had to walk it by myself. Even though we didn't get to know the city then and didn't visit its museums, I can't say that it wasn't memorable. The company of the Italian companions was excellent, although we did not understand their language. It is great luck in a foreign city to have local people by your side. You feel much less of an outsider and much more of a citizen of the world. Especially if the locals are also comrades and host you in their home. I will always remember the evenings when we took the train to Treviso with Loris and Katerina. We felt like we were coming home. From this train I will never forget a pale Italian, who was in short sleeves, even though it was late September and the evening was very cool. He will be unforgettable to me because, while he looked like a Scandinavian, he was Italian but he had worked as a woodcutter in Finland, he had fallen in love there with a Finnish woman who wanted to marry her but her parents didn't want him, and his dream was to return to Finland. I guess with blond hair like that, everyone in Finland would take him for a Finn until they heard him speak.

The secretary of the Italian Anarchist Federation Giorgio Sacchetti – Our first visit to Florence

After the end of the international meeting, together with Loris and Katerina, we took our last walk in Venice and the next day, after saying goodbye to Antonio, who gave us a Murano glass as a souvenir, we left Venice to go to the city where the secretary of the Italian Anarchist Federation, Giorgio Sacchetti, lived. We had met Sacchetti in person at the international meeting, and until then we had corresponded. Before we left Venice he had invited us to visit him, whenever we wanted, at his house in Arezzo. So we decided to go to Arezzo, before going to Perugia, where my cousin Giorgos Kyritsis, son of my uncle Meltos, had spent some time and told us that we could go there whenever we wanted, because there were people, Greek students , to host us. Although we didn't see anything from Arezzo, because as soon as we got to the train station we phoned Sacchetti who came and picked us up, we didn't miss anything visiting Sacchetti. Sacchetti spoke excellent English so together with his wife and daughter Micaela, who must have been about 12 at the time, and a bottle of Chianti red wine, Tuscany's most famous wine, we spent an unforgettable evening. And we hoped that the next day he would also show us the city. He was so hospitable, he gave us his double bed to sleep and he and his wife and daughter slept in the kitchen. And yet, the other day he told us that he was waiting for his mother-in-law and that's

why we had to leave. We didn't like this at all, because we had come from afar and had a history behind us, but now that I think about it again, I imagine that in front of his mother-in-law Sacchetti ceased to be the anarchist secretary of the Italian Anarchist Federation and became the groom. Be that as it may, he was a remarkable man, judging by a fairly rich book he gave us, "Subversivi in Toscana", where he describes the struggles of the Tuscan revolutionaries at the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. When he gave it to us I didn't know Italian. Since then I have learned and made translations, but I have not read this book yet. Perhaps because Tuscany, as much as it is famous for its works of art and its general contribution to European culture, seems to me that as an object of study it is of real interest only to its inhabitants or, at best, to Italians.

From Arezzo we went to Florence which was nearby, since we had heard so much about it until then. We walked around it quite a bit, because it really is a very beautiful city. So beautiful that you cannot say that another city is more beautiful than it, just as you cannot say the same about Venice. But it was bad weather when we went, and that made it a little difficult for us. At least difficult for the photos (specifically slides) that we took, because back then there were no cameras that take digital photos under extremely difficult lighting conditions. Back then, the unsuitable lighting conditions, such as heavy cloud cover, were enough to take dark photos, if you didn't have special high-sensitivity film with you. Of course, if you needed to shoot at close range, you could use flash, but flash didn't help if you wanted to take a picture in front of a nice building, because you had to be more than four meters away. Let alone to get the whole facade of the building, unless you were at a great distance, you needed a wide-angle lens that cost a lot to buy, even if you had a camera that took alternative lenses, like mine which was a reflex. For me, as I think I've said before, photography was my favorite hobby and that's why I had some extra knowledge.

Due to the fact that we wanted to be in Perugia in the evening and there was no train for when we wanted it, we did not visit the sights such as the cathedral, the Palazzo Ducale or the Uffizi museum. After all, we shouldn't have paid so much attention to the sights at that time. That's how I explain why we didn't visit the sights of Venice, or London, when we went there in 1978. And yet Florence is especially famous for its sights that are works of great artists of the era known as the Renaissance. At least we visited the Old Bridge which, like the Rialto Bridge in Venice, has rows of shops on its left and right sides. In the past, namely hundreds of years ago, these shops had nothing interesting to see, but since by the time we visited the bridges I mentioned above, these shops had changed to luxury shops aimed at tourists. Anyway, when after many years Sophia and I went back to Florence again we didn't visit the sights and limited ourselves to seeing them from the outside, like the first time.

Our first experience of the beautiful medieval city of Perugia

When finally, taking the train from Florence, we arrived at the Perugia train station, it was already evening. Our destination was the old town, which is built on a hill and surrounded by a medieval castle, while the new town is down on the plain, where the train station is. My cousin, meanwhile, had told me to look for a certain Manolis Fountoulakis on Del Melo street or a certain Giorgos Katsikas at the "University for Foreigners" (Universita per Stranieri). But at the house where Manolis was supposed to be, no one opened the door for us, the university was closed, and since we didn't even have a phone, we were starting to despair. The environment was also depressing. Manolis' house was on the ground floor of a medieval apartment building, which abutted the castle wall, and the street in front of it was dark and deserted. Even the nearby square that was in front of the "University for Foreigners" was dark and devoid of people. We couldn't do anything other than wait in the square, in case someone came home so we could go and ring their bell again later. But what would we do if no one came? Would we find any hostels? And how would we find one at such a time (it was around 11 at night) since we were not prepared? If we stayed in a hotel, would our money be enough to return to Greece? At that time, credit cards had not arrived in Greece, and even if they had, they were not intended for the general public but for a privileged few. So we were sitting forlornly on a bench, observing in some awe the medieval buildings of the old town and the towering "Etruscan Arch" which is to the left of the square, as you look at the university, when we saw a group coming towards us speaking Greek . Our hopes began to rise and I asked them if they knew a Manolis Fountoulakis or a Giorgos Katsikas. One of the company said that he was Giorgos Katsikas, so I told him about my cousin who had sent us to him and who we were. Katsikas told us that he knew our story and that he would do everything in his power for us. At that point, he took us to stay at Manolis's house, who was also in the group. Later, after some time, he would prove to be one of the best people I have ever met in my life. So we stayed a couple of days in Perugia, before taking the train back to Greece. While we stayed we hung out with the Greek students who politically belonged to the youth organization of the K.K.E. interior (Communist Party of Greece-Of the interior), the "Rigas Feraios", of which Katsikas and Foundoulakis were also members. We saw little of Perugia, but these were enough to close it in our hearts and after several months to find ourselves again in this beautiful medieval city which, like Venice and Florence, the Italian state has given the designation "Città d' arte', i.e. city of art.

I don't remember how we got back from Italy to Greece that time, i.e. if we took a train from Venice or a boat from Ancona. I consider it very likely that we also took a boat, because Ancona was closer than Venice, but my memory does not help me.

Maybe because we quickly made our next trip. In England this time. At that time I corresponded with a Cypriot comrade who lived in London. I don't know how he found my address, but I remember that he wanted to write an article about the anarchists in Greece in the anarchist newspaper "Black Flag" with which he was collaborating. That is why he had asked me to send him information about the situation of the anarchists in Greece. I must have sent him some information, regardless of the fact that at that time I had no organizational connection with the anarchist movement. I told him that we intended to see London again, which we had visited before our imprisonment, and he volunteered to find us a place to stay.

Six years after our first trip, we are going to England again, to comrades this time

The time between our trip to Italy and our trip to England I spent studying and taking exams at my school. Before we left for England, I had managed to pass all the exams and only the English course was left. This I would leave for our return from England, where I would have had the opportunity to practice the language. Also, before we left, I sold my father's car, the only car I ever drove. I had tried and failed to get a driver's license. I had passed the license test, but I failed twice in driving, and the car, as I said above, was breaking down. That's why we sold it for 110,000 drachmas, of which the tax office took 77,000 for road tax that we owed to the state since my father died . After all, I had no intention of spending my life in Greece. Ever since I was in prison, I considered this country a prison for me and dreamed of living abroad. And abroad I would see what I would do with the car issue.

And this trip to London we did also by bus. It was the cheapest medium at the time. These buses traveled directly from Athens to London, via Yugoslavia, stopping at motels on the way only for the physical needs of the passengers, such as food. They had two drivers, so that each of them could rest, without the bus stopping its course. It had started to get cold when we left Greece in mid-November, and we found snow in Yugoslavia. It must have been at that journey that the bus had stopped at a motel to go to the restrooms, but the motel was occupied by members of the ruling communist party and they wouldn't let us in. I remember the black leather jackets worn by most people entering the motel. At that time Sophia, because she was blonde, was taken for Yugoslavian and they let her in. Also in France, outside Paris, the bus ran out of alternator and, because it had no lights, they left us to spend the night standing in a closed motel, where a corridor with coffee and chocolate vending machines remained open all night. After a few hours of standing and despite the fact that it was snowing outside, Sophia and I went and sat down to sleep in the cold bus until dawn when it would start again. I was so cold at that time, that I will never forget

it. In the morning the bus continued to Calais where we took a ferry to Dover. This was the second and last time Sophia and I took the ferry to cross the Manche, which the English call the English Channel. The ferry trip then took around three hours. Neither of the two times I took the ferry to Dover did I notice the white cliffs for which Dover is famous.

At the Dover border police station where passports were checked, we were not asked this time if we intended to marry in England. Our passports had the same last name, so it was clear that we were married! I think, however, that they asked us where we were going to stay and then I told them that we had someone to host us. But even then the Greeks had to answer several questions before the border police stamped their passports, which recorded the date of entry. The right of residence, I think, remained for three months and therefore how long one stayed was evidenced by the entry stamp. Anyway, from the moment we finished the checkup we felt so good that after all, at least I said to myself, the hassle was worth it. We went straight to the duty free shop and bought English cigarettes which were much better than the Greek ones. At that time, few foreign brands of cigarettes were circulating in Greece. And then we got into the English bus, where the steering wheel was on the right and not the left, and we made our way to London, the bus occupying the left and not the right lane of the road, as it was and still is throughout the rest of Europe. The route from Dover to London, which I have done twice in my life, will remain unforgettable for me forever. The English countryside is green, flat and so well-groomed that it resembles a park, while the houses that can be seen from the road, although few, because the road does not enter towns and villages, are all beautiful, because in England the aesthetics it is not separated from the construction art, unless it is government apartment buildings that are built to house the lowest incomes' social strata. We ended up in a such apartment building, after Panikos, the Cypriot comrade who would host us, came and picked us up from the Victoria station. For the first time in my life I saw in him someone wearing gloves with the tips of the fingers cut off, a common thing in England.

The flat in which Panikos lived with his wife, a beautiful Cypriot woman who had suddenly found herself from her small village in Cyprus to London, the largest city in the world at the time, belonged to the City of London and therefore had a very cheap rent. He was in a district of south London, in Brixton, where three years before the Caribbean blacks, of whom there were many, had revolted and clashed for days with the police, causing much destruction and burning many buildings. At the time, some had called on the government of Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to send in the army to quell the rioters, as the police had failed to quell them. Thatcher had refused, saying that if the insurgents wanted to burn down the neighborhoods where they lived, they would be harming themselves and not the country. Thus, in the end, the riots subsided and calm was restored. In this neighborhood with many Jamaican blacks, the comrade's wife was afraid to go out and only left the house once a week, to do her shopping at the local supermarket. We had the opportunity to see during the our stay, that her fears were exaggerated.

This happened when, after a couple of days, Panikos found a house in Brixton, to host us temporarily, and from there we ended up living in the same neighborhood. The house, whither he led us one evening, was in a very old block of flats, of those that were built before art was divorced from utility, and therefore had a name of its own, as used to be the case with all old buildings in London. The flat where we were to live was on the third or fourth floor and had an outside corridor from which one could admire a magnificent view of London's million chimneys. The great majority of buildings in and around Brixton used to be of two storeys, or of a few storeys, and all had chimneys. So from above you saw a forest of chimneys and it reminded you of the London of Walt Disney's wonderful film "Mary Poppins" which I had already seen then, a film which, apart from its other virtues, is also a tribute to one of the worst European professions that have now disappeared: The profession of chimney sweep. In this apartment we found Margaret whom we had met together with Meltzer at the International Anarchist Meeting in Venice. She lived there with her boy friend, or husband, who was also Australian and anarchist like her, Peter Riley. She was short and fat and he tall and thin, but they had made such a well-matched couple that when we found them at home Margaret was pregnant with Peter. This cost us a little, because Peter forbade us to smoke in the flat, in order the pregnant Margaret not to be disturbed from the smoke. So in order to smoke, we had to go out into the corridor of the floor, from where we enjoyed a wonderful view of the chimneys of London. At that time Margaret was preparing a brochure for Molly Steiner, an anarchist and feminist little known in Greece. This didn't impress me as much as the couple's washing machine, for which we left some of our laundry to wash: It still had the commercials stuck to it, as if it were as valuable as a piece of art bought at an auction house.

The first squat in Brixton, where we stayed. Electricity, water, heating for free! – And a little tourism

The accommodation we stayed in was a traditional two story house with garden, on Effra Parade. On the upper floor were the bedrooms and on the lower floor the living room, the kitchen and the bathroom. Sophia and I stayed in the back bedroom and an Irishman, Mike Gilliland, with a Dutch girl in the front. In the living room lived a black cat, Smarty, who spent all day trying to catch a goldfish swimming in a large aquarium, which was also the only decoration of the living room. In the kitchen there was an old gas stove that also had a place to bake bread for breakfast. In each room there was also a fireplace, which had a gas stove in the place where they used to put the wood for burning. The gas was piped throughout the house from a box, inside the house, which took coins. By dropping pounds in coins, it provided you with some cubic meters of gas. Fortunately, the box was tampered with and it was possible to turn the counter with a screwdriver without dropping a coin. So we had as much gas as we wanted and, of course, heating in all the rooms. We also didn't pay for electricity or water, because the process for the providing companies to cut them off it was long and by then the house would have been abandoned, and a new house squatted. These houses belonged to the City of London and therefore there were no litigations with individual owners. The only problem was the bathroom that had broken plumbing and you couldn't take a bath. One day a Norwegian friend had come to fix the plumbing but, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't do anything. In this house we gathered after sunset, because we were out sightseeing all day. Mike and us spent the evenings drinking tea with milk and eating candies. In London, as the English used to do, we only ate once a day, except for breakfast which consisted of tea and toast with butter and jam. Mike, being unemployed, got an allowance of five pounds a week and with that he bought pulses and cooked for everyone. But we, most of the time, ate what we bought from the supermarket, like eggs. We rarely bought any fish and chips either, which was then the most common fast food in London.

Sofia on Effra Parade and to her right, as well as on the right picture, the first squat we stayed at

This time we went to London, we didn't make the mistake of the first time, that we hadn't seen any of the sights. So we visited the Tower of London and the British Museum and the Westminster Abbey and the Buckingham Palace, which we could not enter because it was occupied by the royal family, and the great parks of London, such as Hyde Park, Regent's Park and St. James Park. Even the park closest to our neighborhood. We also visited the Tissot Museum which contains wax figures. We also wanted to visit the Zoo but by the time we found it, it was closed. We also tried to find Marx's grave in the Highgate Cemetery, but we couldn't find the cemetery either. There was no internet back then, so that we could see everything from above. Not even personal computers had arrived in Greece yet, but I don't remember seeing any in England either. But there were walkmans, so we bought one that is still working after 34 years. We bought it from a shop on Oxford Street which is the most famous shopping street in London. We often walked this way when we went to Hyde Park, because it is nearby. In general, we did a lot of walking while we stayed in London, because London is a beautiful city with its own, characteristic, personality that makes it unlike the southern European cities we had known until then. Even from the German and Danish cities I had visited, it is different. A special feature of it is that, at least then, high-rise buildings were prohibited, so you didn't see buildings with more than five floors, with very few exceptions. Also all the buildings were beautiful and that's why it was a pleasure to walk the streets. Even on the streets still were the well-known red double-decker buses that did not have doors so that you could jump wherever you wanted, when the bus stopped due to traffic jams on the main roads.

The big black Rolls-Royce-looking taxis were still running. There were even red phone booths. And there weren't cameras everywhere, like they are today. Even the cops were nicely dressed with nice characteristic hats and they didn't have pistols or clubs, as they always had in Greece. And luckily, this time, I had borrowed a Russian reflex camera so we were able to make a series of beautiful slides.

"Bookstore 121," Jessica and Albert Meltzer

It goes without saying that, while we stayed in London, we had contacts with the anarchists there and participated in their activities. Among the first people we met there, apart from those I have already mentioned, was a stout Australian woman, Jessica, who was the first one interested in getting to know the Greek couple living in occupation. Jessica was a very good and active girl. She was mainly active in the movement in support of the miners who were already on strike for several months. But generally, the anarchists we met, like Jessica, were involved in trade unionism, and they ran a bookstore, which was also a squat and was the center of a lot of activity. The bookstore was called 121, because it was on Railton Street at number 121. It was also home to the newspaper "Black Flag" published by the organization "Anarchist Black Cross", which was active in supporting anarchist prisoners everywhere. The bookstore was quite close to our house, so we went there often. There we also met a companion of an advanced age to us at the time (he was fifty years old), who, when he heard that we had visited Buckingham Palace, told us that he, though born in London, had never visited it, as he had no interest for the kings. This attitude of his, even then, had seemed to me the product of fanaticism. Of course, in addition to going sightseeing, we also went to the anarchist rallies for the miners. But that didn't mean we wouldn't take advantage of the opportunity to get to know London better. So, at some point, we also found ourselves in "Speakers' Corner" in Hyde Park, where we were lucky enough to enjoy a Saudi speaker who said that Saudi Arabia has the most dictatorial regime in the world, but the West turns a blind eye, because it gets the oil from there. Also an Indian, who said that a few days ago the cops had put him in jail for what he said in "Speakers' Corner," even though it's supposed to be a spot where anyone can say whatever they want. This Indian was a great orator. He said that he spends his days in libraries gathering evidence about the crimes of the English in India. He also said something we will never forget: He said he liked England but he didn't like the English. Something I have been saying about Greece since then. This Indian had several dozen listeners. When any smartass tried to contradict him, the Indian would ask him about his national origin and his profession. Thus, it was revealed that his opponent's position was on the side of what the Indian was denouncing and so it was natural for him to kick at what the Indian was saying. If his opponent would not let the Indian speak, he was dealing with a gigantic black man who kept

kept telling him: Let him speak.

One day Albert Meltzer, whom I had interviewed a few months ago in Venice, also came to see us. I was moved by his interest, because even then Meltzer was the best-known English anarchist of advanced age. But Meltzer, like a true anarchist, had no conceit and was always cordial with us. In fact, one night, together with Meltzer and others, we ended up in an Indian restaurant. There, Sophia and I ate the hottest food we had ever eaten in our lives. It was so hot that at one point we couldn't go on. But Meltzer was able and continued, even though he was red from the pepper of the food he had already eaten.

Russian Jewish comrade Leah Feldman and comrade Leo Rosser

Jessica, one day, took us with her to visit an elderly comrade who lived alone, although she could no longer see at all, so Jessica went and helped her with the house. Her name was Leah Feldman and she was a Jew from Russia, where she had lived until 1927. She told us that she had also met Emma Goldman who was a Russian Jew. After 1927 she had been to many places, and in Germany she had met other well-known Jewish anarchists, such as Erich Mühsam, who was murdered by the Nazis in 1934. Feldman had kept some photo albums of interwar Jewish anarchists and brought them to us to see. Unfortunately, my knowledge of the history of Jewish anarchism was non- existent, so all the names he told us were unknown. At the time, we didn't even know the Mühsam that Feldman showed us in photos. Feldman came to London to escape the Nazis and stayed permanently. She told us that she was selling anarchist newspapers in Hyde Park, as early as the 1940s. Fortunately, before she lost her sight, she had managed to visit many cities in Europe, as she told us, because she loved traveling very much.She was very happy when she met us, because until then she had not met anarchists from Greece. She used to call Sophia Sonia, using the Russian version of the name. I remember it well, because one day she was brought to see us, or rather to hear us, at our house, in Effra Parade, and then she told us that she wanted to see Sonia.

Another comrade we had met then was Leo Rosser. He was quite a bit younger than us and was one of the few anarchists in the bookstore 121 who was English and not from another English-speaking country. With him we had gone to some mobilizations, such as a short protest outside the offices of an airline company and a demonstration outside the old prisons in Brixton for the "the prisoners' day", which the prisoners' support movement had designated as a day of nationwide protest against the poor conditions in prisons. In this demonstration we were "three and the cuckoo", namely not even ten people and apart from Leo no one else was English. Four of the protesters were German. They were three men and a girl who had set up a group called the "Kreuzberg Video Group" and, based in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin, traveled around Europe and videotaped anarchist demonstrations.

At that time they had come to London and were living in the same house as us. They were sleeping in the living room. They were impressed by the small number of protesters outside the prisons and asked us if the same was happening in Greece. We had answered them that in Greece hundreds gathered when they were going to demonstrate outside the prisons. We were told that the same was happening in Germany as in Greece. Before they left London, the Germans organized a screening of a documentary they had made about Germany's prisons. In this documentary I had heard a song that said: "Let Germany die so we can live." Since then, I understood what a real anti-nationalist means.

One day Leo invited us to eat at his father's house, at Crystal Palace, where he lived with his father, mother and sister. Until then I had never seen such a rich house. Apart from being a three-story detached house, it had air conditioning from the floors. Leo's parents were both teachers but I didn't ask if they got this house with their work. However, Leo's parents did not have a conceit towards us. The opposite, they were very caring. But Leo was also very caring. To please us, he arranged with friends from Scotland to go and host us.

Leah Feldman and Leo Rosser probably a few years after we met them

Our comrades in Glasgow, our adventures with an inhibited Scotswoman and the Christmas Eve fundraiser for the miners on strike

So one day we took a bus from the intercity bus station to Scotland and after several hours of travel, in a bus with a faulty radiator that left us freezing, we ended up in Scotland's largest city, Glasgow. It had been arranged that two comrades would wait for us at the intercity station. But when we arrived, we found no one and we began to worry. We didn't know what to do and we didn't even have a phone number with us, but luckily, after some time, the two companions appeared and, although we didn't feel like it, they took us and we went to some pub near the station to drink some beers. I still remember their names. One was Pratt (surname) and the other Hugh (first name). Being Scots, they had an English accent that I found very difficult to understand. At that time the Scots, like the Lefkadians in Greece, still kept their characteristic accent. Over the years, the younger generations, listening to English on the radio and television, more or less lost their special accent, just as the younger Lefkadians lost their own special Greek accent. Anyway, with all that, we ended up at Pratt's house who had taken it upon himself to host us. Unfortunately, this house was not his but his girlfriend's, a Scotswoman who had spent years in America and admired it so much that she had an American flag in the living room. I, that night, because of the flag and assuming that Pratt's girlfriend also had progressive ideas, spoke out against the Americans. And yet the Scotswoman had no progressive ideas at all, and consequently she got very angry with me, without letting me know it. But I realized it the other day, when, after a visit to the Glasgow Anarchists' office and a forenoon and afternoon in the most central street of Glasgow with the Anarchists, who were collecting money for the striking miners, we came home and the Scotswoman’s brother opened the door shouting and cursing us for supposedly cursing and threatening his sister the night before and therefore we could no longer stay in that house. Without giving us a chance to answer him, or even give us our things, he kicked us out badly.

So, on a dark night in December 1984, we found ourselves in a pitch-black working-class suburb of Glasgow, without our belongings and not knowing where to go or what to do. Leo had given us and we had with us the address of Hugh's house. Having no other solution and seeing that this house was in the same area,

we started looking for it. After a lot of walking in the cold and dark, we found his house which was an apartment in a working-class apartment building. It made you sad to look at it. The living room had for furniture only an old, rickety couch and four very young children were playing in the room, as if they were on the street. Hugh's wife spoke her English with such a Scottish accent that we hardly understood anything but that she knew nothing about Greece. She didn't understand what we were saying either but luckily she realized we were looking for Hugh and called him.

Hugh came and got us and took us to the office, where we also found our things, and where he told us we could sleep, because, as he told us, he was not on good terms with his wife, and she would not accommodate us. But the office was like a very small corridor and it was also occupied by a typing machine, so there was no place to stretch out to sleep. Hugh understood this and persuaded another fellow, whom we had met at lunch at the miners' fundraiser, to host us in his own house. I think his name was Tommy.

His English was somewhat better than the others. With him we went from the office to his house, which was on the other side of the river that crosses Glasgow, the Clyde, on foot, carrying also a large traveling bag, which required two to carry. We were cold but Tommy seemed to be used to it and didn't understand the cold like we did. In his house where we ended up, he lived with his wife, a nice girl, very kind. During the two or three days we stayed there, we slept in the living room, which was quite furnished and tidy. A richly furnished room compared to the living room of Hugh's house. The toilet of the house also had a shower, which we learned had been installed a few months ago. Until then, they didn't have a shower in their house. This had made a great impression on us because in Greece we did not know any houses without a shower and a bathtub in the bathroom. The only thing that bothered us was that they didn't let us go to the kitchen. It wasn't until the day we were leaving that we realized why: So that we could sleep in the living room, the couple slept in the kitchen and they didn't want us to come and go in their temporary bedroom!

Tommy introduced us to an old comrade who had impressed me because he drank beer and whiskey at the same time, as I discovered at a pub where he and Tommy were frequenting. Tommy was a vegetarian and this pub was offering very cheap some big plates full of different vegetables. That's why Tommy often went to it. There we also tried vegetarian food for the first time. At that time in Greece there was still no such thing. We learned from Tommy that there was much more poverty in Scotland than in England, so many Scots migrated to nearby Northern Ireland. We also learned that because they were Protestants, adding the fact that the British state ensured better treatment for them than for the Irish, the Irish Catholics were in constant conflict with them. Something which at the time had culminated in the city guerilla war of the Irish Republican Army.

Unfortunately, our stay in Glasgow was so eventful and uncertain that we were not given a chance to do any sightseeing. The only sight we saw was the city's cemetery which is located on an elevated part of it. We didn't go to the cemetery to see it as an attraction, we just happened to pass by it as we strolled through town and thought it a good idea to go in as it had a lot of notable monuments. In fact, to enter we had to cross a bridge, something that has never happened to me since with a cemetery. What impressed us the most is that many old grand tombs had Greek letters. I did not know then that in Scotland during the nineteenth century classicism

had developed so much that wealthy Scots saw ancient Greece as the cradle of culture and the ancient Greek language as so admirable that they wanted it written on their tombstones. Another thing, also, that made the cemetery interesting for me, is that it did not have crosses, like all Greek cemeteries. For those who had not built imposing monuments, they had simply placed a standing tombstone on the ground, on which were written the details of the deceased and perhaps an epigram. And you noticed that the graves were not cared for, as in Greece, where widows like to take care of the graves of their relatives. Finally, I remember a towering column topped by a statue of John Knox, a famous Scottish leader of religious reformation in Scotland.

Part of Glasgow Cemetery with the John Knox statue pillar in the background

In Glasgow we stayed until Christmas Eve. From a tourist point of view it was a good time to visit Glasgow, because the central parts of the city, such as Buchanan Street, where the anarchists used to fundraise for the miners, were decorated for Christmas and this made them more beautiful. Of course, the fact that we went to Glasgow on the eve of Christmas was purely coincidental. We went to Glasgow to meet Scottish anarchists, like the “Clydeside anarchists” we met. I call them Clydeside anarchists, because the paper they printed in their office was called "The Clydeside Anarchist". The issue that our comrades were handing out with the miners' fundraiser was a single sheet, and so I was left with the idea that the Scots are a miserable lot. Finally,

on our last night in Glasgow, which was spent at Tommy's house watching TV, the TV happened to show the famous Walt Disney movie “Mary Poppins” which shows a London so beautiful as no other movie. I can say that I saw this movie for the second time (I had seen it for the first time in Greece) at the right place and time.

Christmas 1984: From central London to Brixton on foot and loaded!

Next day, early in the morning, we crossed the Clyde again by one of its central bridges carrying our large traveling sack (or rather bag, for it had two handles) and took from the intercity bus station, near Buchanan Street, the bus to London. I left Glasgow with a heavy heart for London. Not because I wanted to stay longer in Glasgow but because before we went down to London, I wanted to visit Edinburgh which is the capital of Scotland and has the most attractions. I didn't know if we would ever come back to Scotland to see this famous city and now that we were so close, we couldn't go because we didn't have the money for the ticket. I remember that it corresponded to 5000 Greek drachmas at the time, a relatively small amount compared to my monthly income. Eventually, in our lifetime, we went to Edinburgh. But this happened 26 years later. Even so I must be pleased, because as the saying goes: "Better late than never."

By the time we got to London, after once again suffering the cold in the poorly heated bus, it was well into the night. A surprise awaited us there that we will remember for the rest of our lives: The underground railway stations (what we call the Metro in Greece) were all closed and no buses were running. How would we get home? We asked about a taxi and the taxi driver told us that because it was Christmas we would have to pay double the fare, namely £16 as I recall. This amount is high even today, considering that the pound is around 1,20 euros. If we paid this amount, we would not have enough money to return to Greece. Our only hope was for our companions to pick us up in a car we knew they had. To this end I phoned Margaret and told her about our plight which made us unable to travel from Victoria Central Station to our home in Brixton, South London. Margaret replied that we shouldn't wait for the car to take us in any case

and we should do what we could! So, that cold Christmas night, we found ourselves in despair and as if that wasn't enough, we had an additional problem. The money we had with us was Scottish pounds, and at the station office where you could exchange national currencies for pounds, they didn't take them. Fortunately, we eventually found an Indian supermarket, one of those overnighters with a special permit, that accepted Scottish pounds, giving us change in English. So we were sitting outside the station and our only company were the homeless people who in England drink a lot because of the cold. In fact, one, the one who told us that this situation repeats itself every Christmas, offered us his bottle of whiskey to drink to warm up. Finally, seeing that we had no other way to return home, we decided to return on foot. So we started, each holding a handle of the huge bag, and, often looking at the map we had with us, walked through the night and the cold to the river, the Thames, crossing it by a bridge, as we had done in the morning with Clyde, and continued our walk to Brixton. When after at least an hour of walking we arrived home and found Mike, it felt like we had come back from the edge of the world. Mike had also received from his mother in Ireland the typical Irish Christmas gift: A box of matches!

A failed attempt to evacuate the squat where we lived and the terrible smelly neighboring house, which we squatted after the first squat was abandoned

Now, what I don't remember is which house we went back to, of the ones we stayed in, while we were in London. In the first or the second? Because, while we were there, a time came when we had to leave the house we lived in, because the Municipality sent ushers to seal it. The first time there was a big mobilization by our supporters and when the bailiffs came they found a lot of people living in the house, even a girl with a baby in a pram. So the bailiffs left without doing anything. The baby the girl had brought for support was the scariest baby I have ever seen in my life. It was a baby with an old man's face! Anyway, before the bailiffs came another day, Mike had decided to take over the house next door, which would be evacuated by the family that was staying. Moreover, he had been told by this family that they would leave the door open when they would evacuate the house, so that Mike could get in at his own convenience. Mike, however, had asked them to close it, because he intended to enter from the back, given that the yards of our houses were only separated by a wall. So it happened. One night Mike jumped into the yard next door and entered the house. But someone must have alerted the police because after Mike entered the house, a patrol car showed up and drove around to see if anything was moving inside the house. But Mike had noticed it and played the dead bug. The next day we also entered this neighboring house normally, from the main entrance.

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

I don't remember ever entering a house that smelled as bad as this new house of ours. I wonder how the family lived there, which, it should be noted, consisted of mother, father and a sixteen-year-old son. As soon as we entered, we started cleaning it. We swept and mopped, even scraped the floors, to get rid of the smell. We cleaned it for five whole days before finally settling on it, but the results were nil. The smell wouldn't go away. But what to do? We could not extend our stay in the original house so we left it and a few days later the bailiffs came and sealed it. At least the new house had a bathroom. But the hot and cold water taps did not communicate and it was an adventure to wash off, after taking a bath while filling the tub. You needed many jugs of water.

I also don't remember which of the two houses we were in when some Belgians came and interviewed us for a libertarian newspaper they were publishing, the "Alliance Libertaire". We had also given an interview for the magazine that, apart from the newspaper of the same name, came out every fortnight with the title "Black Flag". Unfortunately, I did not get hold of the subsequent issues of the magazine, nor the "Alliance Libertaire", so I do not know if, after all, the interviews were published.

Before we left London, we also visited the Freedom newspaper's offices that we had visited on our first trip to London. We bought very few publications, because we were poor with money, and we did not manage to convince them to give us some books without money and to send them the money from Greece. Since then, I never went back to the offices of this historic newspaper, which had dedicated some articles to us while we were in prison.

So we arrived at the day we had to leave. And yet life in London, limited as it was due to lack of money and constant uncertainty, we liked it. And we weren't afraid of the Jamaicans in our neighborhood who we saw with the big hats, which were fashionable for the Rastas of the time, sitting by the dozens outside some of their shops, because they had nothing to do. They told us, the comrades, that they sold drugs and that they could rob you. Sophia and I did not accept the slightest disturbance when we passed through the street where their shops were and a large cultural center, which, after the arsons of 1981 and the cleaning of the burnt buildings, was built there with the money of a famous singer of rock music. Even Mike wanted us to stay with him in the squat. In fact, when we were cleaning it, he had suggested, to please us, that we take the front bedroom on the first floor and he and the Dutch woman take the back. This Mike was very modest. He was always wearing some clothes that he hadn't bought and that's why they were small for him because he was tall and, as I said, every evening he cooked for all of us. And his Dutch girlfriend, a blonde, slim, beautiful girl, wore the usual ripped blue jeans, from which others cannot tell whether the wearer is poor or rich. In short, the best dressed and most financially comfortable in the squatting were me and Sophia. We certainly didn't become a burden to our roommates who were also comrades. In fact, one afternoon, Mike brought home an anarchist newspaper that had been published in Greece at the time, the "Allelegyi" (Solidarity).

But not only was the money that was left to us just enough to get back to Greece by bus, but my passport was also expiring on December 31st. And then, to get another issued, I should clear up the matter of the army. That is, I would either have to join the army or I would have to get a deferral of enlistment. Anyway, Mike would be waiting for us to come back and I, after getting rid of the enlistment to the army, I intended to come back again. We never came back. Nor did we see any of all these friends and companions again. In fact, after a couple of years, Leo came to Greece and left, without saying anything to us. We were not so saddened by this as by the fact that, shortly after his return to England, he committed suicide! And we never found out why, given that he lacked nothing. And he was young and very likeable and active in the anarchist milieu (he had learned Spanish so well that he maintained the correspondence of the "Black Cross" with the Spanish anarchists and had also visited Spain) ...

Returning to Greece due to the expiration of my passport with the hope that we would be back to London soon – The end of my university studies

We took the bus to Greece one night, just before New Year's Day, from Hanover Square, where its route used to end when coming from Greece. As it left a fog-filled London, passing through lighted tunnels, I told myself that, in a few months, we would be with our friends again in this great city. And yet it was a full 26 years before we set foot in London again, and when we came back, we saw none of our friends from that time. Even the bookstore, 121, was long gone, and our street, Effra Parade, where, when we had been there, the first house in the row of identical two-story houses had been burned and half-demolished by the African-American riot of 1981, had turned into a street for the rich, since all the houses in the row had been renovated into luxury residences and sold to the rich.

I don't remember anything from the journey back to Greece which would certainly have been extremely tiring, since we would have had to spend at least two days inside the bus, with some stops only for the toilet and for fast food. But I remember very well our arrival in Athens, around 9 in the evening, at Syntagma Square and from there our journey to Vrilissia, where my mother lived. In Syntagma Square all, or almost all, the phones in the phone booths were broken, so we spent a long time looking for a telephone booth to call my mother, while the bus we took to take us to Vrilissia, never arrived in Vrilissia and it dropped us off somewhere, half a kilometer before my mother's house. The driver justified his decision not to fulfill the usual route claiming that he could not go any further due to snow! So, Sophia and I, while we had managed to get from London to Athens, we couldn't get from Athens to Vrilissia! So we were forced to be loaded with our big bag again, each of us holding a handle, and walk through the night, in the cold and snow, until we found my mother's

house. Such "crash landings" in Greece are always indelibly etched in your memory, to remind me that Greece, in terms of organization, is not Europe and therefore you cannot feel here the security that you feel when traveling in Europe, at least in Western Europe.

After my return to Greece, I thought it was time to take the English exam at Panteio, because without passing this course, I couldn't get a degree. The exams were both written and oral and I thought the time was right to take the exams because I had recently practiced my English by staying in England for a month and a half or so. And as things eventually turned out, I never stayed so long in England again in all my life. However, I passed the course with excellent mark (9 to 10) and so in February 1985 I found myself with the diploma of Panteio, the department of political science, in my hand. The overall grade was 8, which satisfied me, because I had taken my high school diploma with 17 and 12/13. I was annoyed that for a thirteenth (1/13) I hadn't got it with 18! My interest in "round" numbers is a side of the, shall we say, perfectionism that dominates my life and makes me get stuck on things worth talking about. Unfortunately, as my life turned out later, I didn't get a single drachma, not a single euro, due to having that degree. I would say that I wasted my time studying at Panteio, if political science had not been my choice as a subject of study. When one chooses to do some things in his life, without making his choices dependent on the acquisition of money, this means on the one hand that he does not have an immediate financial problem and on the other hand that he wants to be in control of his life and not his life to depend on his financial needs. Although both of these were true for me at the time, the fact that I studied political science and not mechanical and electrical engineering at the National Technical University of Athens, as my father had dreamed of, is ultimately due, as we have seen from the above, to the fact that the Greek education system was so bad during the seven-year military dictatorship 1967-1974 (when I was in the sixth form high school) that I couldn't get used to math, no matter how much time and effort I put into it. And I was one of the best students...

DEFERMENT OF MILITARY SERVICE AND FIRST STAY ABROAD

In the armored cars' training camp of Avlona, in the camp's disciplinary cell and in the psychiatric section of the 401 military hospital, in order to get deferred the enlistment in the army

My biggest problem at the time was the army, where I would have to report, as my ten-year deferment due to studies had ended on December 31, 1984. I didn't want to join the army at all, on the one hand because I didn't like being to be bullied and face abuses by all the scumbags who take advantage of their military service, to satisfy their most vile instincts at the expense of their colleagues who they consider weaker than them, and on the other hand because I considered the service in the deep state, of which the army is a part, as a betrayal of the principles of humanity and the anarchist ideas, which I embraced. In fact, the fact that I had spent three torturous years and nine months in prison for being an anarchist made me even more determined not to betray these ideas, for which I had already paid so dearly.

The only way used at that time, by those who did not want to go to the army, was the "Treloharto (Crazy Paper)". That is, they pretended to be mentally ill in order to be exempted from conscription for health reasons. Those who refused to play it crazy and claimed conscientious objection served four years in prison and were locked up in military prisons, where they had fewer rights than those held in civilian prisons. Such an attitude, until then, was held only by the fanatical Christians known as Jehovah's Witnesses. Until then, thousands of them had been imprisoned, since the introduction of compulsory service in Greece, and some had even lost their lives because of their refusal to serve the murderous apparatus which is called "army". Two of them were executed in 1949 for this reason. In 1985 several hundred Jehovah's Witnesses were locked up in military prisons. This was a kind of sacrifice, like that of the Christians of antiquity, which no Christian non-Jehovah's Witness would accept to undergo in order to avoid conscription. Those who could not remain insubordinate abroad or be wanted by the police inside the country, chose the "Treloharto" as the only solution. But even that was not certain. Some, like my comrade Kyriakos Moiras, had been tortured to get it and had not succeed. Others had not been able to endure the tortures and had, in the end, served.

It goes without saying that I didn't want to be tortured to get a "Treloharto" and that's why I tried to be prepared a little, collecting confirmations that I'm mentally ill. I was able to get one from a private psychiatrist who was a very nice guy and so was known to be able to serve you in that direction, as well a certificate from the inmates' psychiatric hospital of Korydallos prison, for the time I was confined there, during the time I was in prison. In fact, the certificate was signed by the psychiatrist Maratos, the most infamous among psychiatrists, against whom Sophia had filed a lawsuit that was never tried!

With these papers, taking some heavy tranquilizers, to appear depressed, and with a Santa Claus bag full of anti-militarist magazines of the "Committee on the Army", I started in April 1985 to go to the armored camp in Avlona, where I had been invited. I also had long hair and a beard, which was forbidden, according to the call- up paper the cops had brought to my mother's house. I had to shave and cut my hair short, not more than two cm long, before I presented myself. In order to spend less time in the camp, until I was sent from there to the 401 military hospital to be examined by a psychiatrist, I arranged to go to Avlona in the afternoon, just before the sun went down. I was also lucky enough not to go alone but with my former fellow prisoner Theodoros Tsouvalakis, who had a motorbike (“duck”) and was willing to take me to the camp with it. Tsouvalakis was the best choice for that time, because he had also received a “Treloharto” and that's why he was optimistic enough to give me courage. And the trip from Vrilissia to Avlona with a “duck” was a good introduction to the battle, which I intended to give in the camp, in order not to become a "combatant".

At the camp gate, which was noticeably a long way from the camp buildings and you had to walk quite a while to get there and see what was going on, I was given an announcement that began with the words: Welcome new black beret! It was a camp that trained infantrymen in tank warfare and those receiving such training wore black berets to distinguish themselves from other infantrymen and to be proud of belonging to this special corps. Like the "commandos", known as lokatzides, who wore green berets to distinguish themselves from others. I was disturbed by the fact that they had chosen me for such a special corps, while they knew my political past. This choice seemed like a challenge to me and so I didn't feel at all proud that I had been sent to the tanks. The tanks for me were associated in my memory with the military dictatorship and the suppression of the Polytechnic University uprising of 1973. Of course, the announcement they gave me when I passed the gate of the camp was intended to make me feel proud that I was chosen as a black beret.

When I got to the buildings I saw a lot of people gathered outside a building and I learned that there was the kitchen and people were waiting for food, as I had to do too. I did not join the queue but sat on the edge of a sidewalk some distance from the queue. A non-commissioned officer who noticed me came over and asked me why I wasn't sitting in line like everyone else. I answered him that I was not like the others, because I was sick and therefore I had no intention of serving in the army. I even asked him to take me to be examined by a doctor. He accepted taking me to the doctor, but before that, he took me to another line, where they were handing out military uniforms. I told him that I had no intention of wearing military clothes and he immediately went and reported me to the officer who was doing the handing out. This officer was in a little room and I could not see him. When he heard that there was a recruit who would not accept the military uniform, he became furious and shouted for me to be brought before him, to see who it was that had such audacity. When I presented myself before him and he saw a bearded, long-haired man with black glasses and a Christmas bag, he knew he was wasting his time and told the

NCO who was accompanying me to pick me up again and take me where I had asked. What impressed me about the non-commissioned officer who accompanied me was that he knew the name of the kiosk keeper in the central square of Vrilissia and attributed this to the fact that he was also from Vrilissia. I couldn't imagine that I accidentally ran into a NCO from Vrilissia. On the other hand, what he had to say to me in order to gain intimacy with me was characteristically army camp's talk: That the man keeping kiosk was masturbating all day long! I was disturbed by this way of speaking, not only because it characterized vagrancy but also because the stallholder was an old man of great age. I had learned from a young age to respect elders.

Anyway, I ended up in a ground floor building, like all of them, in which there was a long narrow hall with some desks in the back. Behind one of them was a young man in military uniform who introduced himself as the doctor I was looking for. Right next to him sat a high-ranking officer. I told the doctor that I was mentally ill and therefore could not serve, giving him the certificates, I had brought with me. He told me that they would send me to a military hospital to be examined by a psychiatrist, but until then I would have to stand in line like all new recruits to be registered. I answered him that I would not join the queue because I was not in a position to be with the crowd, I was sick, I did not want to see anyone and therefore I should be locked up in the disciplinary cell. The doctor was confused and did not know what to do, but the senior officer intervened who, after reading the papers I produced and learning that I had served three years and nine months in prison for possession of weapons and explosives, granted my request by asking two military cops to take me to the disciplinary cell.

So I found myself in a disciplinary cell again, four years later than the last time I was there, which was in March 1981. And this time I had by myself asked to go and they had not taken me there by force. This was something they certainly did not expect to happen. Always in the disciplinary cells, the soldiers were locked up by force and this was a kind of punishment, while I had asked to be locked up myself. Be that as it may, in this way I was also spared the humiliation of being recorded, which I had also experienced in 1974, when I had presented myself at a camp to be examined and recorded. And since the disciplinary cell was not far from the room where the recording took place, I listened the whole process and I saw what I had avoided. At some point, two soldiers came and put a lamp in the disciplinary office, because the one it had was burnt out and I was left in the dark.

The next day I was notified to go with many others to the hospital to be examined. They put us in two military buses and took us to the 401 military hospital. In the same hospital they had brought recruits from other recruitment centers as a result of which there was a big crowd of people. Owing to the human flood none of our own

camp had had the time to be examined before the doctors stopped examining, so they sent us back to camp, to be taken back to the hospital the next day.

I ended up, as I wanted, in the disciplinary cell. I spent the rest of the day and night in there, waiting the next morning to be taken back to 401. In fact, I received a visit from a former classmate of mine, Vlachos, who had presented himself in the same order as me and in the same military camp. He too was fighting to be released on mental health grounds. I had not seen him since we went to the sixth form high school together. After this time I only saw him once more in my lifetime.

Finally the next morning they went to 401 without taking me with them. I don't know if they did it accidentally or on purpose, I only know that at some point a short colonel appeared together with two tall Alphamites (from A.M. = unit police) and insisted that I get a haircut and shave, because I wasn't allowed to be two whole days with hair and beard in the camp. I told him I had no intention of serving and therefore there was no reason to get a haircut. He insisted, threatening that the Alphamites would take me for a haircut by force, but I did not “chew”. He was generally not aggressive with me. He gave me a whole lecture to convince me that the army was no longer as barbaric as it used to be, and he invoked his many years of experience to make it believable. Characteristically, he boasted that he had been a "combatant" for fifty years.

I was spared the haircut but I didn't see anything being done to me. Until in the afternoon they called me to go to the office of the deputy director of the camp and there I found Sophia having a verbal fight with them, because, even though I was sick, they kept me in the camp for more than two days. There was also the fifty-year-old colonel, who was trying to convince Sophia not to worry, because the army had changed and was not barbaric, as it used to be. At last the sub-commander, who was the same one who had sent me two days ago to the disciplinary cell, granted my request, after consulting on the phone with the commander, a brigadier general. He gave the order to put me in a jeep and send me to 401, along with another recruit who had been completely speechless for so many days. Someone wanted to come with us, who had only one leg and a wound had been created in the amputated leg, but he did not make it.

So, me and the speechless man got into a jeep, but it didn't want to go ahead. After the driver of the jeep and his assistant were quarreling for a couple of hours, they managed to fix it temporarily and we started for the 401. The whole way the jeep made strange noises and the driver and his assistant were afraid that it would break up on the road. Little by little, however, we managed to reach Athens and we ended up, me and the speechless one, in a ward of the psychiatric clinic of the 401 military hospital. Sophia also came and found me in this ward during the visits’ hour. In the bed next to mine was the speechless one. Me and Sophia managed to gain his trust and thus find out that he too was fighting to get released for mental health reasons and that's why he wasn't talking.

I learned from Sophia that she had managed to get to the armored cars' camp of Avlona (or Avlonas, as the village is now called) in the car of my childhood friend, Mimis, accompanied by her brother, and that she had made a big fuss in the gate, to be let with the car into the camp to find me. She had come to find me, because she had been worried after seeing me not "giving signs of life" for two whole days. And she was determined to stay with me in the hospital. So when visiting time passed and she was told to leave, she didn't leave. They came again and again told her to leave but again she did not leave. I, in the event that they would take her out with force, I had told her that I would not let such a thing happen without protest and to protest, I would break the window. Fortunately, they finally left her all night in the hospital, so I didn't have to end up in a sedition, which most likely would have cost me to be tied in the basement of the psychiatric department and be given sedative injections, as they had done to Kyriakos Moira, at the time when they had brought him from Messolonghi with his veins cut.

Next morning I was called to the military psychiatrist, who, after a few minutes' examination, recommended a two-year deferment of my enlistment. While waiting to get the deferment paper from the hospital secretariat, I met my old friend and comrade Christos Zygomalas who had come to the hospital accompanying his father, who was a military officer. It would be many years, entire decades, until I saw Zygomalas again.

Postponing conscription and abandoning the dream of living in England

So in April 1985 I found myself with a two-year conscription deferment in my hand and the hope of leaving Greece for good, in my heart. After all, before we left England, our flatmate, Mike, had told us that he would be waiting for us to come back. We did not return, however, because at the same time we were given the opportunity to go again to Italy, which Sophia preferred as a place of our permanent residence instead of England. We would go with my cousin Giorgos and his brother Roulis. I, after much thought, had agreed to settle in Italy, since it was closer to Greece and therefore I would feel safer, and I would thus be given the opportunity to get to know another culture besides the English one, with which I had some relation, because I knew the language. After all, having visited Venice, Florence (even if only for a few hours) and Perugia the previous year, I had found that Italy is a very beautiful country. Also, the Italian comrades I had met were very good to me and hosted us in Savona, Treviso and Arezzo. Still in Perugia, where we intended to stay, we had made friends with some Greek students who were very nice guys.They would host us until we find a house to rent.

The Turkish comrade Mustafa Yokce who had translated Bakunin

A few days before we left for Italy, a Turkish comrade appeared at our house, who lived permanently in France and had learned about us from the newspaper of the French Anarchist Federation. His name was Mustafa Yokce, and he had translated excerpts from Bakunin's books into Turkish, which he had made into pamphlets and published in Paris, where he lived. He intended to go and distribute them in northern Cyprus, which was and is Turkish. Mustafa made a very good impression on us, although we had difficulty communicating with him, because we had to communicate in French. Such a good impression, that since we were leaving after a few days from Greece for a long time and therefore we could not host him ourselves, we asked a couple of comrades to find him a place to stay, of which the girl, Maroula, knew French well, having got a diploma too. We had been acquainted with Maroula and Panos, her friend, through Thodoros Tsouvalakis, because the girlfriend of Tsouvalakis and Maroula were fellow students at Panteio. Maroula had finished the Sociology Department of Panteio and was an active feminist. She was, after all, the one who hosted Mustafa, after our departure for Italy. And when, after a few months, Maroula went to Paris for further education, Mustafa helped her financially with a small amount, somehow repaying the hospitality.

On the deck of the ship to Italy covered with a blanket for which we should apologize!

From Greece to go to Italy we left by ferry boat from Patras. Since, at that time, one could not take money abroad more than a certain amount for each trip, nor could one make withdrawals from one's account in Greece while abroad, we had with us all the money we were allowed and would have to live the next three months. Three months, at that time, was the maximum length of stay allowed for each trip to Greek tourists by the countries of Western Europe. We would necessarily stay like tourists. Those restrictions made us save a lot from the beginning of the trip. So we got two deck tickets and not a cabin, assuming we could sleep on the ship's airline seats. Unfortunately for us, such seats were not allowed with the tickets we had purchased, so we were forced to spend both nights of the voyage from Patras to Ancona, Italy, on deck under the stars.

Although it was July 15th when we started our journey, it was a bit cold at night on the open sea so we had to cover ourselves at night with an orange blanket we had with us. Unfortunately for us all the double bed blankets on the ship were like ours and so, as we were sleeping on deck, a sailor came and took the blanket from us saying it was from the ship!

As we insisted that the blanket was ours, he led us to the reception to speak to the head butler. Fortunately, he, judging by the roughness to the touch of the ship's blankets, in relation to the roughness of ours, certified that the blanket was ours. The ship's blankets, being frequently washed, were rougher to the touch than ours. I also have to say that even though we were traveling with my cousins, we were on our own for the entire trip. They had got a cabin to sleep but we didn't see them even during the day, when they weren't sleeping. Maybe this distance they kept from us makes me now to not remember if we traveled together from Ancona to Perugia. Even in Perugia, my cousins were hosted by Michalis, a good boy, a student who also lived with a student Litsa, while we were hosted by Manolis Fountoulakis. We saw each other very few times until they left for Greece.

The wonderful summer of 1985 in Perugia of Umbria which is considered the "green heart" of Italy - Our hearty Italian friend Patricia Franca who taught us Italian for free

In the house where we stayed after our arrival in Perugia, we had also stayed the previous year, after the International Anarchist Meeting in Venice. Apart from Manolis, there lived also another student, Christos, who, because he was a bit cross-eyed, reminded us of the then famous English comedian Martin Feldman. This student was then finishing the mathematics department of the University of Perugia and read a lot. Despite all that, we also had some company with him, when with all the student friends of Manolis and Giorgos Katsikas, whom I mentioned above, we went out and went to the municipal cafe. In the summer we went often. In the winter "Feldman" finished his studies and left for Greece. After some months following his return to Greece we learned that he drowned while swimming. This was another one of our friends, about whom I write in this autobiography, who died then and did not continue on their way in life, like me and Sophia. Another was the Leo I mentioned above. And below I will mention other such friends, people i.e. who did not live long enough to grow old, like me.

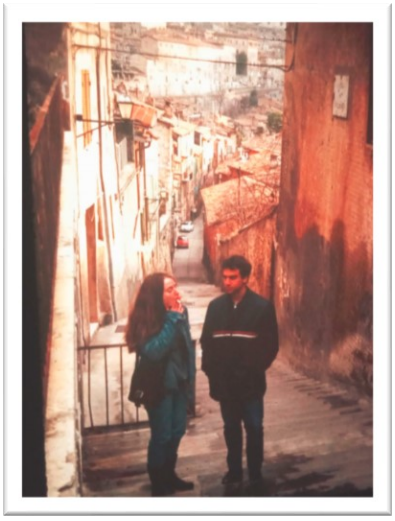
I and my cousin Roulis (Christos) with the old town center of Perugia in our back

It was nice that summer in Perugia. Katsikas managed to find us a house relatively close to Manolis' house, i.e. near the Etruscan Arch and the "University for Foreigners".

Sofia with our benefactor George Katsikas

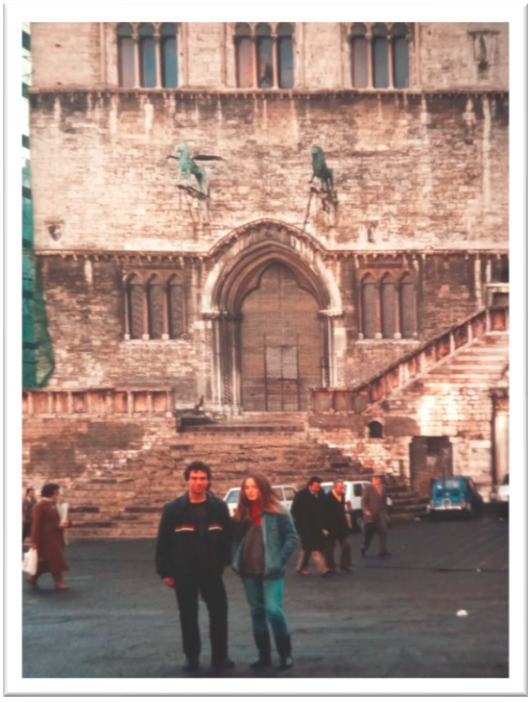
Sophia Manolis and I with Perugia behind us

Before us, a Turkish student lived there with his girlfriend. The Turk left Perugia, because he finished his studies. The house was a furnished studio, with a very small kitchen that instead of a sink for washing the dishes had a small washbasin. It was on the third floor of a medieval block of flats and from its window you could see the back yards of such blocks of flats. Yards drowned in greenery. Umbria, the province of Italy whose capital is Perugia, is rightly known as the "green heart of Italy". In fact, the municipal cafe where we frequented, as I mentioned before, had a great view of the green fields that surround Perugia and, in general, dominate the landscape in Umbria. Umbria is not a plain. It's all green hills with medieval villages, surrounded by walls, just like the old town of Perugia, where we lived.



Sophia and our friend Vangelis in the street we lived (Via del Fagiano)

I had never stayed in a medieval city before and didn’t stay since then. The old town of Perugia is one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Europe and its wall is in good condition for the most part. The medieval cities of Italy are very beautiful, because there the buildings were built by craftsmen who loved their work and wanted people to praise them for it. They didn't just work for the money. That is why they built beautiful buildings, taking advantage of all the opportunities that the development of architecture up to that time gave them in order to make them attractive. And modern Italians, like their grandparents and great-grandparents, are doing everything in their power to preserve their architectural heritage. And I must not fail to mention that, before the creation of the Italian state that included Rome in 1870, Perugia belonged to the papal state that had Rome as its capital. That is why it is full of churches and monasteries. Unfortunately, at the time, I was not interested in the artistic treasures housed in these churches. So I didn't visit them and limited myself to admiring them only from the outside. And we must not forget that in the Middle Ages the main employer of artists was the Catholic church, which is why the churches of the time represent the pinnacle of the art of their time. Too bad that while we were in Perugia, about ten months, its cathedral was closed for repairs. We were never able to get in.



Sophia with Vangelis, who visited us the next year after our arrival, in front of the City Hall of the town, opposite to the cathedral, in the central street (Corso Vannucci)

But we did not enter the other churches of Perugia either, being indifferent to the artistic treasures they hid. Only in Umbrian churches outside Perugia we entered, which I will talk about below. At least, we saw some of them from the outside, although I cannot say with certainty that we appreciated their architecture as we should. Instead of doing a bit of tourism in Perugia, we spent the summer hanging out with the Greek left-wing students and especially with Manolis and George, whom I mentioned above. In addition to Manolis Fountoulakis, another Cretan had joined our company: Manolis Diktakis. He was around 19 when he came to Perugia and we met him but he already knew how to drive a car and play the Cretan lyre. He also had money and bought a sports car, with which our group once visited Lake Trasimeno, where Hannibal had defeated the Romans at the end of the third century before Christ. And, without question, Diktakis played the lyre for us several times, when the group gathered at Manolis's house and not at the municipal cafe which was also quite close. We drank a lot of wine then. We bought bulk wine from an undertaker who was a neighbor of Manolis and made his own wine and we drank it either at Manolis' house or at the municipal cafe.

We often went to the municipal coffee house, the whole company, taking with us a large bottle of wine from the undertaker, which we hid under the table, so as not to provoke the employees of the coffee house. They were not professionals but volunteers and that's why they turned a blind eye. We even went to the municipal cafe to play chess. Manolis Fountoulakis knew good chess and often went and played accompanied by a timer. There I played timed chess for the first and last time in my life. In general, the summer of 1985 was for me one of the most "social" periods of my life, i.e. a period with many friends and entertainment. And even good friends, like Patricia Franca, an Italian teacher who gave Italian lessons to the Greek students and we met her through Manolis who had a very good relationship with her.

Patricia had a daughter, Eliza, who was then about four years old. She was separated from her husband, who had some connections with the far-left movement in Italy, and that is why Patricia was also sensitized towards political struggles. This was the reason why Patricia offered to give us free Italian lessons, since we were completely ignorant of Italian at the time. The lessons were held at her house, which we already knew because we used to go there with Manolis and George and drink some wine with Patricia. Patricia was a strong glass. And a very good Italian teacher. With 15 lessons she made us finish the entire Italian book of the "University for Foreigners", which those who studied Italian at this university, needed a whole year to finish. The notes that Patricia had us keep were so well organized and comprehensive that I used them for many years when I had questions. We were lucky to have an Italian teacher and we took advantage of this luck every day by listening to Italian on a small black and white TV that George Katsikas had given us and we had in our house. That time was when we first got to know leading actors of classic Italian cinema who were unknown in Greece, such as the leading comedian Antonio de Curtis, known as Toto. We watched a lot of TV back then, because the TV picked up quite a few channels and some played 24 hours a day. As for music, we had a transistor radio and mainly listened to the station of the Church of Perugia,

because it played the best music (mostly classical).

Two incidents that happened in the municipal coffee shop in the summer of 1985, will remain unforgettable for me. One was at the birthday of Eliza, Patricia's daughter, which we did at the municipal cafe at Patricia's expense. We were a big group and Patricia insisted that, every now and then, after every children's birthday song or something said about Eliza, the whole company should say "wishes Eliza" (that's what they say instead of "happy birthday" in Italy). We were starting to get pissed off but Katsikas, by repeating "wishes Eliza" a lot more times than Patricia asked, and making us shout it like a chorus, made us so cheerful that we had laughed so much, as few times in our lives.

But, I laughed more than any other time in my life, when at an instance that we were laughing again at Katsika's jokes, suddenly a Greek comrade, a friend of Maroula, who we knew from Greece, came and spoke to us. She had been in Perugia for a few days with her sister, who was then studying in Palermo. The comrade was upset, because in Greece at that time they had caught one of "ours", accused of bombings. Her concern and her words, instead of making us serious, made us laugh more and more, because the situation seemed very inappropriate. Of course, we had drunk a lot. Finally, “our” man confessed in the interrogations that followed, that he was an agent of the National Intelligence Service and that everything he did, he did at the behest of his superiors. His name was Danos Krystallis. Unbeknownst to us, fate brought us to laugh with a concern that was unwarranted!

How much did we laugh then... I will never forget the incident with a hen that another friend, Andreas, who knew and played the guitar, had brought to Manolis' house, so that we could boil it and eat it. In the company we also had Manolis Diktakis with his lyre, namely we had two "musicians" that afternoon. We are all gathered, even Patricia, and we waited for the hen to be boiled, which it did not, no matter how many hours we waited. But, while waiting, we were eating delicacies and drank while listening to Manolis and Andreas playing music. Katsikas with his jokes "had his fair share", as they say, and I was "adding fuel to the fire" with my laughter. We had such fun at that stage, that I even sang some English songs that I knew, so that Patricia, who did not understand Greek, could listen to them.

With Diktakis' car and the company, we had at some point visited the house where Andreas lived. It was a large farmhouse in the country, where Andreas lived with others and it was very cheap, because houses in the country were at that time much cheaper than houses in the city. But you needed a car to get around town. With Andreas and his roommates and with the help of Diktakis' lyre, we had a great time.

In the homeland of the capuchins, Assisi, where I drank the best cappuccino coffee!

It must have been October 1985 when we visited one of the most famous towns in Umbria, Assisi, where one of the most famous saints of the Catholic Church, Saint Francis, saint of the poor and founder of the Capuchin order, was born and buried. Assisi is on a hill, like all medieval towns in Umbria, and to get there we had to walk quite a bit from the train station that brought us from Perugia. And on the way we had found a blouse on the road. We thought that the blouse was lost during the peace march that had taken place a few days before from Perugia to Assisi. It was October 6, 1985.

Assisi as seen from the road leading up to the town from the train station

Before we took the uphill road to Assisi, I had the best cappuccino I've ever had, in the station cafe. I don't know if I got this impression because we were visiting the seat of the Capuchins, Assisi. Also, before we took the road uphill, we visited a beautiful church, where Saint Francis breathed his last, the "Our Lady of the Angels".

Our Lady of the Angels

Anyway, Assisi is also a beautiful city, although I don't remember any Umbrian city being ugly. Its most important attraction is the church where Saint Francis is buried. It is famous because some of its walls were painted by Giotto, who for the first time introduced into iconography the perspective highlighting of space, i.e. he made the images have depth. But apart from its illustration and from an architectural point of view this church is a work of art. It consists of two floors below which there is a crypt, where Saint Francis is buried.

The Basilica of Saint Francis, where the saint is buried

I knew little about St. Francis when we went to Assisi. All in all, it was a movie by Franco Zeffirelli, "Brother Sun, Sister Moon", where the saint appears as a protagonist in a romantic love movie. Not that I ever looked to find out more. From some Italian church, perhaps from the Basilica of St. Francis, where the saint is buried, I got a book of his prayers with notes (free, of course), which I never read, and I saw a film by Pier Paolo Pasolini, the famous "The Hawks and the Sparrows", where the leading Italian comedian, Toto, play St. Francis and talk to the birds. So I learned that the saint wrote songs and claimed to talk to birds. But I know that the Capuchin, or Franciscan, friars were friars who went about the cities, dressed in a thick brown cassock with a hood (cappuccio in Italian, that's why they were called capuchins) and a shaved head on top, and they lived on alms. As the dervishes, these Muslim monks, lived in the East. Certainly, walking in Umbria, which is a green area with low hills and a mild climate all year round, is not difficult. What the Capuchins did in Umbria, they could not do in places where in winter it is terribly cold and the streets were full of mud and infested with robbers, as in Greece at the time when this religious order began its activity.

Forced return to Greece, return to Italy, back to Greece and Christmas in Italy – In Greece the cops kill 15-year-old Michalis Kaltezas

When we finished three months abroad, we were forced to return to Greece, because the permit we had to stay in Italy expired. And our money too. We went back by bus. At that time, the cheapest way to get to and from Perugia was the "Sehidis" buses that left Athens and, via Thessaloniki and the former Yugoslavia, went to the Italian cities where Greek students studied.

At our house in Greece, an incredibly unpleasant surprise awaited us: In the freezer of the closed refrigerator (I had emptied it and closed it before we went to Italy) I had forgotten some slices of a fish. These had become rotten, the worms had eaten them, then they died too and the rotten worms were left in the freezer. The fridge smelled awfully bad and we had a difficult time trying to clean it. Traces of the bad smell remained for a long time to come. However, we must not have stayed long in Greece, because I remember that we were in Perugia when the police killed fifteen-year-old Michalis Kaltezas in Exarchia on November 17, 1985. We had learned about it the other day from Skirmizeas, whom we had found by chance in the "University for Foreigners", where I often went, because it had a branch of a Perugian bank, where I had deposited the money I brought from Greece. At that time in Athens the riots turned the city upside down. Protesters broke 103 banks! A friend, Vangelis, whom we knew from the time we lived in Vrilissia, at Titsa's house, had sent us details of the episodes in a letter.

We also must not have stayed too long in Perugia the second time we went in 1985. I say this because I remember going back to our home in Perugia on Christmas Eve. I remember it because we had arrived in the afternoon and we had no electricity. It was also cold but we couldn't get warm, because the heating elements that worked with natural gas were lit with electricity. We assumed it was just a power outage, so we waited for the power to come back on, lying under blankets to keep from getting cold. In that completely uncomfortable phase, there was a knock on the door and Patricia appeared at our house, with someone or some other acquaintances, bringing us her favorite liqueur, Fernet Branca, as a Christmas present. Due to the situation they did not sit down but left immediately because it was dark. After they left, because the electricity was still not coming on, I decided to go out into the street and find a phone booth, to call the company that provided the electricity. Fortunately, the company's technicians came right away and found that the switch on the supply apparatus was turned off. This apparatus also served the apartment next door, where, as we had learned, a daughter of the owner of our apartment lived with her boyfriend. They were missing from their apartment and had turned off the switch. Anyway, the Italian technician who brought us the electricity left me with the best memories because he was very kind, he didn't complain that there was no damage and yet we called him, and he didn't get angry when the candle I was holding to see in the dark dripped on his jacket. If he were Greek he would have shouted at me for both of the above reasons. From such small details you understand the cultural differences between some peoples with many common cultural characteristics, such as the peoples of Europe. And we are talking about 1985, when still in Greece bullying and bravado had not become national sports, as they did after 1990 when Greek nationalism peaked.

From the New Year's Eve of 1986 that we spent in Perugia, I remember that after the change of the year, various crockery was thrown from the windows of the houses onto the street. In the morning the street was full of broken plates, glasses, jugs, etc. This custom is also found in the Ionian Islands, which for over a hundred years were part of the Serenissima Republica, as the state of Venice was called, which Napoleon Bonaparte I “erased from the map” in 1797. Perhaps for this reason one encounters this custom in the Ionian Islands.

Winter in Perugia – Learning Italian by learning about Italian culture

We spent the winter of 1986 in Perugia locked up, most of the time, at home. Fortunately, we had good heating. Despite all that, we didn't feel very comfortable. Some of the Greek students, with whom we hung out, had returned to Greece and we no longer visited the municipal cafe with the large terrace with the excellent view. The terrace was not used in winter. The isolation we had begun to feel was so great, that Sophia began to think about returning to Greece. I didn't want to go back to Greece and made sure to use my time studying Italian. I had brought a self-teaching method from Greece and studied it from beginning to end, recording and studying all the unknown words and solving all the exercises. The Italian we constantly heard on TV and our conversations with Patricia helped me practice both listening and speaking the language. During those months in Perugia I learned Italian so well that when I finally returned to Greece, I was more fluent in Italian, which I had studied for less than a year, than in English, which I had been studying since I was eleven years old. On the other hand, by learning Italian, I began to familiarize myself with the Italian culture, which is admirable in many ways. And first of all with Italian cinema, which produced top directors like Rossellini, De Sica, Visconti, Fellini, Pasolini, etc. as well as leading actors, such as Eduardo de Filippo (director and actor), Peppino de Filippo, Taranto, Fabbrizzi, Mastroianni, Sordi, Gusman, Toniaci, Manfredi and many other actors and actresses such as Magnani, Masina, Lollobrigida, Magano, Loren et al. And above all Antonio de Curtis, known as Toto, of whom I knew nothing until I went to Italy. Neorealism, which was the most important post-war artistic movement in cinema, is a creation of Italian cinema. Even the "folk" Italian cinema, as we could call films that aim to entertain the public and have no depth or message, had a quality and that's why they had success even in Greece, like the films of the "folk" actors Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia. Not to mention the other mainstream movies, the "spaghetti westerns," whose Italian directors, like Sergio Leone, outsold even the Americans. The Italians had a tradition in all the arts, where they produced top representatives, so it was only natural that they also excelled in cinema. After all, the cinema was the most popular form of entertainment after the war and that is why it emerged as a powerful industry. This industry attracted huge investments and provided work for hundreds of thousands of people. In Italy, where this industry reached its peak of efficiency and profits, an entire city was built outside Rome so that directors could shoot films in the settings of their choice: The City of Cinema (Cinecittà). Since I was a small boy I had the cinema as my only entertainment, so I had seen hundreds of good movies before I went to Italy, many of them Italian. It was only natural that learning the Italian language would lead me to "take off" watching classic Italian movies on Italian TV. Even if the TV we had in Perugia had a very small screen and it was also black and white. After all, most of the top Italian films were black and white.

I cannot say that the same interest that I acquired in Italian cinema, I also acquired in the other arts, where Italy has distinguished itself. The architecture, as I said, I had the opportunity to admire every day in the streets of Perugia. Unforgettable among them, due to being extremely unusual, was the Via Appia which was like a long narrow bridge over or next to medieval buildings. I have not walked such a road since. And yet in Perugia I walked this road often and I will not forget that once I saw on one of its two mantels an extremely calm Ankara cat. She didn't move when we went to pet her, just like another cat that we had found sitting on a car hood on another of our walks and she didn't move. Perhaps Perugians are quite animal-loving, and that's why they don't scare cats when they're young, so when they grow up, they're quite calm.

In Via Apia, on one of whose mantels we found the extraordinarily calm Ankara cat

The beautiful medieval cities of Umbria

My familiarity with Italian painting and Italian sculpture was much less than my familiarity with Italian cinema and Italian architecture, because as I said above, I entered very few churches. And the Italian churches were open to the public, not like the Greek ones which have nothing beautiful to show (I exclude the churches of the Ionian Islands) and yet are closed, when no ceremony takes place in them. One of those that particularly impressed me was the church we saw in Todi, designed by the famous Renaissance architect Bramante, the “Our Lady of Consolation”. We visited it during a day trip we took with Patricia's car. With us, apart from Patricia, was also Manolis and another student friend of ours nicknamed Englishman who also had a great sense of humor. So, when we went, this church was empty of priests or candlelighters, because the priests who were in charge of it were not afraid of thieves, as is the case with almost all Italian churches. And yet it also had statues and paintings. It also had lots of cards for those interested in souvenirs. I, seeing the field free, took many of them, without leaving a coin. We didn't have any money left. And neither did the others had money left, when, after church, we went to the village, Todi, and surprisingly found a wallet with 50,000 Italian liras, becoming very happy because of it. We found it on a mantel and after taking the money we dropped the wallet in a mailbox so that its owner would not have a problem with his papers, IDs, etc.

The Church of Our Lady of Consolation outside Todi

With this money we went, the whole group, to a tobacco shop that was also a bar, like all tobacco shops in Italy, and we ate something casual while drinking something.

It was spring when we toured Umbria in Patricia's car and the weather was perfect for travel. We had also been, I remember, to Orvieto, another beautiful Umbrian town with an excellent cathedral. Unfortunately, when we arrived it was closed and we didn't go inside. But we sat on the grass in front of the temple and admired its facade.

Sofia with our Italian friend and teacher, Patricia in front of the cathedral of Orvieto

There in Orvieto we also visited a large well that you could descend till the bottom with stairs. I never had the chance to visit such a well in my life.

Orvieto's well which we descended by stairs to its bottom

In the evening of that day we all ended up together in a traditional tavern in the countryside which I think was a stable and had been converted into a tavern. It was full of people, because that day would probably be a holiday, otherwise Patricia would be working at school. I have known very few such taverns in my life, that's why when I see them in movies, they seem like another world to me. A world of the rich, where I have no place.

Our political isolation in Perugia and our "acrobatics" to survive

What we lacked most in Perugia was political action for anarchy, which was easy while we were in Greece. We had found no active anarchists in Perugia to work with. That is why we had sent, from Perugia, letters to various anarchist collectives in large Italian cities, to help us find a home in their city. In Perugia we only saw an elderly anarchist traditional printer who stuck a wall newspaper on the front of his shop but we never found the courage to approach him. Just as we did not approach another interesting personality, Gorini, also old, who had converted an iron bed into a car and drove it around the main streets of the old city, impressing its always abundant tourists. Although he had also given us his card, where it was written: Free thinker. All we managed to do was gather some prison material through Litsa, who knew someone who was active in the prison movement. It should be noted that Perugia had prisons, where there were prisoners from all over Italy. And it would also have many political prisoners, because at that time in Italy, due to the armed action of the revolutionary organizations during the 70s, there were many thousands of political prisoners.

I had only seen the prisons of Perugia from the outside and they had also seemed medieval to me. You reached them after going down a large tunnel with stairs that started from the center of Perugia and to the left and right of the stairs there were ancient findings from the Etruscan era, because thousands of years ago Perugia was an Etruscan city. This tunnel was another one of the most famous sights of Perugia.

Regarding, finally, the demonstrations in Perugia, while we were sitting there, I only remember one where we went, because it had something to do with our interests. And there must not have been more than ten people in it!

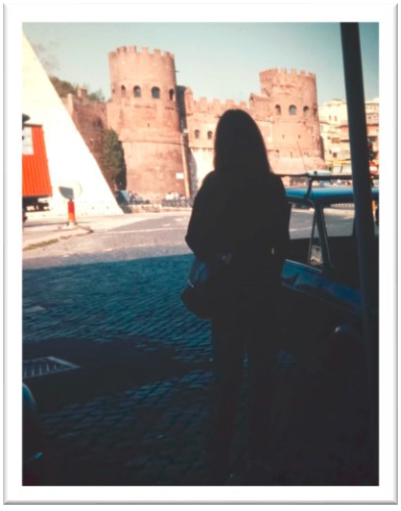
I must not hide that in Perugia we faced great straits from a financial point of view. We ate spaghetti every day, because it was cheap. But the cheese, the parmesan that Italians use for spaghetti, was very expensive, so we had to steal it a couple of times. At some point I tried to steal meat too but I put it back when an employee who could have seen me started yelling for the manager to come to the register. Despite the measures we were taking, one time we got caught at the checkout, because Sophia had put a shampoo in a nylon bag, not noticing that the bag was quite transparent and the shampoo could be seen. When they caught us, they took us to the butcher of the supermarket, who, I believe, also served as store security. This was an aggressive Arab who shouted at us and emphasized that we should have been in his country where we would have had our hands cut off for what we had done. Luckily, they finally let us go without calling the police.

Of course, we were not the only Greeks who stole items of insignificant value in Perugia. Other Greek students also tried to cover some of their needs in this way. I remember a friend who targeted a bookstore that sold books at half their face value. From this bookshop the friend removed every day an album of the works of some great painter, and considered his day lost if he did not do such a "good deed," as he called it. Sophia from this bookstore managed one day to remove a dictionary and give it to me as a present for my birthday.

Although our money was tight, we did not back down when Manolis suggested we take the bus and visit the "eternal city", Rome, the capital of Italy less than two hundred kilometers from Perugia. We would not have gone with Manolis, if he had not secured a house for us to stay. We were going to stay with a friend of his who was studying Medicine in Rome. Manolis would not go there for the first time.

All roads lead to Rome!

So, one fine spring day, we found ourselves in the city where all roads lead, as the ancient Romans used to say, for indeed all the great roads of the Roman Empire led to Rome. The house that hosted us was in the center of Rome, near the Roman Forum, and overlooked a pyramid. It was a large apartment with many rooms, but there were several Greek students living in it, so they could pay the rent, which was quite high. Fortunately, Manolis knew them all and that's why we, as friends of Manolis, were welcomed. On the other hand, we did not hide our political past either, something for which open-minded people, like the left-wing Greek students in Italy, showed us special appreciation. This past not only made the students interested in our political views, consequently engaging in long discussions with us, but they also showed a willingness to offer us everything they could. In particular, a friend of Manolis, who was studying Medicine, offered to guide us to the most important sights of Rome, such as the Colosseum and the Pantheon.



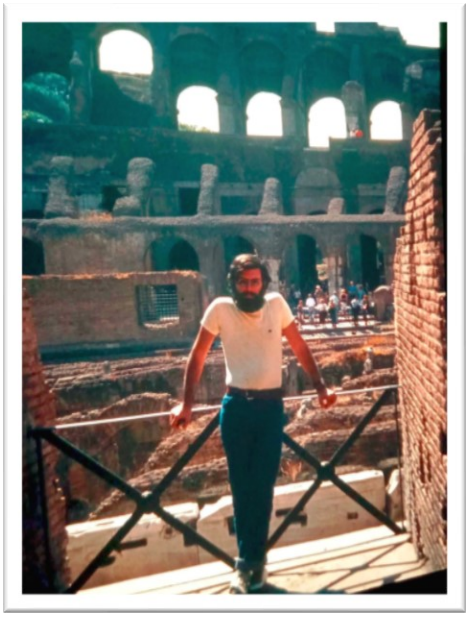
Sophia out of the building where we were hosted with the pyramid and a castle gate at the background

From the avenue near the Colosseum, I remember a huge wall of relief maps depicting the evolution of the Roman state over the centuries, from a republic occupying only Rome and the surrounding area, to the Roman Empire stretching from the borders of England and Scotland in the North to present-day Iraq in the East, and to the Sahara Desert in the South. In some of these maps the empire occupies all the countries around the Mediterranean, which explains why the ancient Romans called the Mediterranean their sea. From all this huge, for that era,

state the Romans brought animals and slaves to be killed in various spectacular ways in the Colosseum, which is now in ruins. Nevertheless, it is a large and impressive building.

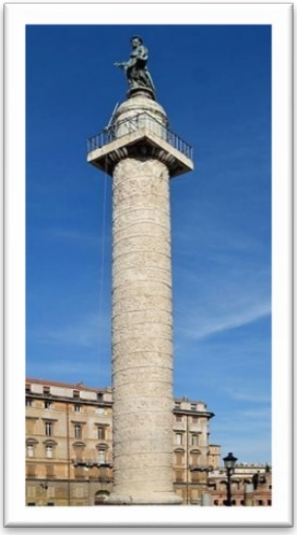
With Manolis and Sophia out of the Colosseum

From the inside, unfortunately, one cannot see what the Colosseum was like during the period it was in operation, because its arena no longer exists, but the labyrinth of rooms and halls that were beneath it can be seen. If you don't know details about the "interior" of the Colosseum, you don't understand many things by seeing the ruins of the spaces that were under the arena.



In the interior of Colosseum, a labyrinth of ruins, from which you cannot understand how the interior was when Colosseum was in use

The Pantheon where Manolis' friend took us after the Colosseum, was in much better condition. Near it we also saw the famous column of Trajan, where they are depicted relief scenes of battles given by the emperor Trajan, in whose days the empire acquired its greatest extent.



The Pantheon in Rome, one of the best-preserved ancient monuments and Trajan's Column, which we visited afterwards, near it

In the following days, Manolis' friend did not come with us. But Manolis came and together we visited the Vatican, the tiny state in the center of Rome that is left of the papal state that occupied all of central Italy, before the Italian state was established. Now what kind of state it is raises a lot of debate, because there are no visible borders between it and the Italy that surrounds it, while its army, the Swiss mercenaries with the characteristic uniforms, is purely symbolic and has only touristic and not defensive value. And the Vatican has plenty of tourism, because in its center is the cathedral of Rome, St. Peter, which stands out not only for its artistic value but also for its great size. And in addition to being an important attraction, it is also a place of pilgrimage for Catholic Christians everywhere, since the Apostle Peter is supposedly buried under it and the pope himself officiates in it, who, for Catholic Christians, has so much weight that, when they cross themselves, they cross themselves with four fingers: One for their god, one for their god's son, one for their Holy Spirit and one for the pope. Even the pope himself is a sight to behold, when he delivers speeches from a building window above the circular court of St. Peter, to the thousands who flood the circular court to see and hear him. Catholics believe that he is closer to their god than any other human being, and for that alone he is, for them, an important attraction. At least, with the Catholics and tourists who flood the circular courtyard, in front of St. Peter, to see the pope, it does not happen the same harm that is happening sometimes to the Muslim visitors to the holy stone, the Kaaba, in Mecca of Saudi Arabia, where every now and then dozens, even hundreds of them, are killed by the crowding.

Fortunately, when we visited St. Peter together with Manolis, it didn't have the many people who gather to see the pope, nor the tourists who in the summer overwhelm the most famous sights in the world and that's why you have to stand in line for a long time, until you can get close to these sights. Thus, we were given the opportunity to see the most famous works of art of the temple, such as the dome above the "holy table", which rests on four towering spiral columns and the "throne of Saint Peter". We also went down to the basement and saw the tombs of the popes of the past. My only unpleasant memory of visiting the Vatican is the incident of someone sexually harassing Sophia, as Sophia told us, while we were in a small shop in the circular courtyard looking for souvenirs. She showed me the one that molested her but I didn't know what to do. She was offended in Italian and I, like her, didn't know how to fight in that language. Finally, the rascal didn’t pay for his insolence. From that little shop I got a big poster with the faces of all the popes since this institution was established. We may have been doing tourism, but financially we were not doing well at all, and that's why, when Manolis took a sandwich from a canteen parked near the castle of St. Angelo, we didn't take anything even though we were hungry.

With Manolis on the road that ends in St. Peter

It must have been that night, when together with Manolis we found ourselves on the banks of the Tiber, the river that runs through Rome, watching on a large screen that had been set up there, the film "The Rage" by Pasolini, which was shown as part of a multi-day tribute to Pasolini. The screening took place in an open space and did not have a ticket, while it had chairs for the spectators to sit on. I remember that, shortly before the start of the screening of the film, as we were talking with Manolis sitting on the chairs, someone from the front row of chairs turned around and asked where we were from, because he couldn't understand the Italian we were speaking. Manolis replied that we did not speak Italian but Greek and asked him where he was from. The Italian replied that he was a Roman, i.e., from Rome and not, of course, an ancient Roman. In Italy only fanatical nationalists, such as fascists, see the ancient Romans as ancestors of today's Italians. I remember the incident, because I was impressed that an Italian confused Italian with Greek. I assumed then, that in Italy so many dialects were spoken, that even Greek, for someone hearing it for the first time, would seem like one of them.

Another afternoon, after we had walked for hours by the river, one of the most beautiful walks I have ever taken in my whole life, we found ourselves first in the Piazza Navona, in the square where, as I learned much later, the popes of old times had their house, and then, after nightfall, in Piazza di Spagna. Before reaching Piazza Navona we passed by the famous Trevi Fountain, an impressive fountain that has a huge trough in front of it, where it is customary to throw coins into its water and make wishes. Inside Piazza Navona there are three other less impressive fountains,

which also consist of clusters of statues, like the Trevi Fountain.

With Sophia on a bridge over the Tiber River with the castle of Rome, known as Castel Sant'Angelo, in the background

At that time, I had no idea of the history of sculpture, and was such a stranger to this art that I had no interest in knowing who had made all these fountains. I admit to myself extenuating circumstances, because until then no one had talked to me about sculpture and I had seen very few statues in my life. Besides, in Chalandri, where I grew up from the age of three months, I don't remember there being any statue, until one day they made a crude statue of a soldier and put it in the central square, to lay wreaths, during national anniversaries. Even today, Chalandri has few and insignificant statues, not full-body but busts. And yet the people of Chalandri, with the ignorance of the nouveau riche provincial, think they live in a rich and prestigious suburb. Many of them have given huge sums of money to buy apartments in Chalandri, which compared to Rome is nothing. In other words, it has nothing to see.

In Piazza di Spagna, where we went next, there is a huge staircase, with an impressive church at the top and beautiful buildings to the left and right of it. A lot of people gather there every night, mostly tourists, and they sit for hours. It does not have a view of the whole city, like the staircase that stands in front of the Church of the Sacred Heart at the top of the Montmartre hill in Paris, where every night many people sit for hours, but it is in the heart of a city that is a kind of museum. As I

learned much later, the popes who ruled Rome, until it passed to the newly formed Italian state, had spent a lot of Catholic church money to make Rome the most beautiful city in the world, in order to serve as a showcase for the Catholic church. Those who sit on the steps of Piazza di Spagna are surrounded by all this beauty, so they don't miss the panoramic view. That's why we also sat for a while and admired Rome at night. I think very few of those who go to Rome for tourism, don't. Many years later a poster of Piazza di Spagna fell into my hands and I framed it and hung it up. I don't think anyone who saw this frame thought that its content was connected to one of my fondest memories: Visiting the "eternal city".

Another day we visited the catacombs of Rome, where, according to what we had been taught in school, the first Christians hid from their persecutors. In order to enter, we were forced to enter with a tour guide, so as not to get lost. There were several tour guides giving tours in different languages. A certain number of people who spoke the language in which the tour guide gave the tour slowly gathered around each one, and when enough people gathered, he put them inside the catacombs. There was no tour guide for Greek, but there was for English. Even though English would have been easier for us to understand, Sophia and I chose the guide who spoke Italian, because the one who spoke English was surrounded by Greeks who, in order to show off, spoke loudly and we had no appetite to face their conceit. In all the trips I've made in Europe, I avoided the Greeks because many of them are full of conceit and use foul language. They even shout, because they think that the banalities they say are important discourses.

Anyway, with the Italian guide we went down into the catacombs, which, as he told us, were never a hiding place for Christians, because they were not hidden. It was a simple cemetery of ancient Rome and because many inhabitants of Rome buried there their dead, was known to all. The relationship of the first Christians with the catacombs was like that of the others, i.e. they also buried their dead there. And since one always finds religious symbols in graves, because all religions promise life after death, there were Christian symbols on Christian graves. On the other hand, the managers of this historic attraction were right to impose escorts. The catacombs are a labyrinth that stretches for several kilometers and, if you get lost in there, it’s difficult to be found. That is why the entrance to many underground corridors was closed with red tape. From what our guide told us, a teacher who had thought that he didn't need a guide, had once been lost in the catacombs together with his students. It had taken two days to find them. Back then, of course, there were no cell phones. However, the visit to the catacombs was well worth it, because this city of the dead located below the surface of the earth is an unusually evocative environment. That's why, since then, to anyone who was telling me that he was going to visit Rome, I insisted that he should also visit the catacombs.

Unfortunately, we could not stay in Rome any longer, as we were being hosted, and it was time to leave. We didn't like that at all, because many sights we hadn't seen yet and we didn't know when we would get the chance to come again. Leaving on the bus, the well-known song "Arrivederci Roma" was playing in our minds, but we never saw Rome again. I have always said that Rome is a place worth living. I did not know then that Rome had been made so beautiful by the popes in order to be a symbol of the prestige of the Catholic Church, a symbol that the Catholic Church always needed and especially after the dominance of Protestantism in Northern Europe and Great Britain. Nor did I know that the money that was needed to make Rome so beautiful, the Catholic Church took from the people of Central and South America, as well as Africa and Asia, where Catholicism exists, by force of arms. This church was represented by the Crusaders who distinguished themselves, like no one else of their time, in seizing everything that was most valuable in the places they conquered, such as Constantinople and Jerusalem. Nor did I know at the time that, behind all this showcase, the Catholic church hid the terrible reality of exterminating every dissident with the tortures and executions of the Inquisition. The Jews in particular had been targeted by the Catholic church and to escape torture and death by fire, they were forced to flee to the Ottoman Empire, not to say that, where orthodox Christians were in power, they fared much better. The word "pogrom" is Russian, because in Orthodox Russia the persecution of the Jews became, in the middle of the previous century, a favorite occupation of the mob.

In Naples of lords and plebeians to seek comrades and relocation

When we got back to Perugia, we got a letter from a Neapolitan comrade, who answered our plea to the anarchist collectives of Italy to help us find a house to rent in a big city. He was the only one who answered us positively, i.e. he wrote us to go to Naples, where he would find us a house to rent. Especially from Milan they had completely let us down. Someone had written to us that to rent a house we would need at least 2,000,000 Italian pounds, while in Perugia we were paying 200,000. So, in April 1986, we took the train to Naples, hoping that, finally, there our dream would come true.

We arrived in Naples in the afternoon, when the sun was still high. The address we had was in the center of the old town, and because the old town has some of the characteristics of a maze, it took us a long time to find it. Finally we found it and saw that it was a ground floor, where a local anarchist collective had its offices. Several people were waiting for us there and were eager to talk with us. But the person who had called us, known as Francesco the Fat, in contrast to another comrade, Francesco the Long (he was tall and thin), was not there. He was at his country house on the island of Ischia in the Gulf of Naples. And this created a lot of problems for

us, because someone had to accommodate us. We had no money left over for a hotel. But none of them had invited us and therefore no one felt responsible for our hospitality. After hours of discussion, during which I pointed out to them that if we had known there would be no one to accommodate us, we would not have come, and since we had spent so many years in prison and so many hunger strikes for anarchy, a couple was found hospitable enough to accommodate us. I don't remember the name of the male comrade but I still remember the name of the female comrade because it was unusual: Immacolata (immaculate). This is one of the nicknames of the Virgin Mary that are very common in Italy, as in Greece. I also remember that Immacolata was very dark. At her house we spent the first night in Naples, which is also a beautiful city.

Immacolata's house was also in the center of the old town and even on the top floor, with the consequence that the sea could be seen from its balcony. Of course, we wouldn't have found it at night if Immacolata and her husband hadn't taken us there, because, as I said, the center of the old city has the characteristics of a labyrinth. But during the day, with a little patience, we became able to find it, as we found out the other day when we went out with Sophia to walk and get to know the city a little. We immediately understood what district we were in, when in every corner we could see a very small counter, on which contraband cigarettes were sold. And those who had the stalls were Neapolitans and not foreigners.

A street in the center of the old town, like the one where it was the apartment we stayed in Naples

Since the house was close to the port, we quickly went out to the coastal road which is the most open and most suitable place for a walk. As in Thessaloniki, the central part of the port has no facilities for unloading or loading ships and serves only as a promenade. At some point along the way there is a large castle and further along the

coast, an islet, Santa Lucia, with another smaller castle connected by a bridge to the coast. We tried to enter this castle, but it was closed, because we did not arrive in time for visits. I knew the island from a well-known Neapolitan song, before I went to Naples. This song belongs to a series of Neapolitan songs of the 19th century that are so beautiful that they have become internationally known. Their best-known performance is with the mandolin, an instrument that nowadays few care to learn. These songs are the "registered trademark" of Naples and there is no famous Italian singer who has not sung them. The most famous of these is "Oh my sun" (O sole mio).

Behind me the castle on the islet of Santa Lucia

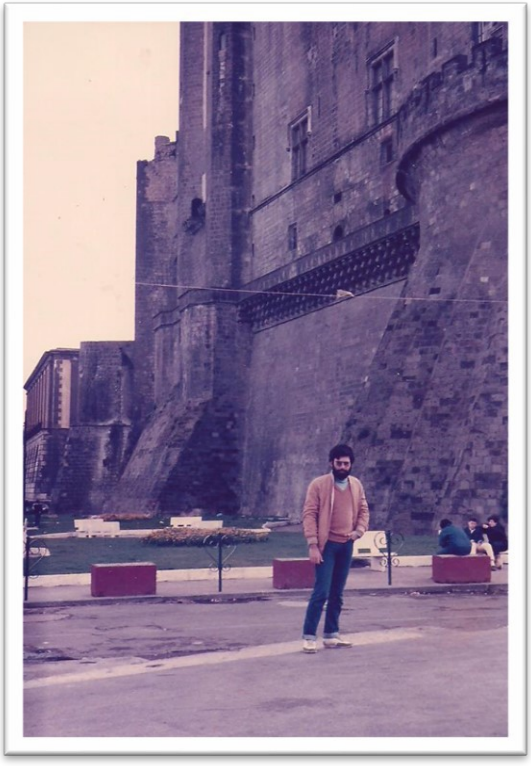
Demonstrating with comrades in Naplles - A pushy street vendor

With Immacolata and the other comrades, in those days, we participated in an anti-imperialist, if I remember correctly, demonstration. I speak about Immacolata, because she distributed the leaflets. The demonstration had passed through the main streets of the city and had quite a few people. I don't remember if it was that day or another, as we were returning home and were in the park in front of the big castle taking pictures, when a motorbike stopped in front of us with two girls on it, who asked us to take their picture. We were impressed by this, because they knew they wouldn't see their photo. We would develop the film and print the photos when we would return to Greece, and they didn't even ask us to send them the photo!

Sophia with the girls who asked us to photograph them too.

Also, in the same park, another day we were accosted by a young man who had a bag and was selling something, asking us if there will be a war between America and Russia. Although our answer was no, he continued to ask us what we would need in case of war. When he saw that we had nothing to answer him, he told us that in case of war, the first thing we would need were Band-Aids. Pulling a box of Band-Aids out of his bag and insisting we buy it, he made us understand why he was giving us all this introduction. We could never have imagined, that he would tell us all this story to sell patches! We bought them because on the one hand he wouldn't say to leave us alone and on the other hand he had the face of a mobster. And our Naples was known for its powerful mafia, the Camorra, long before we went.

Me in front of the great castle of Naples, in a nearby park of which we photographed the girls and we also had to buy band-aids to be ready for war!



In front of the same castle

Pompeii: An ancient city that the volcano covered with ash to become tourist attraction after two thousand years

Being in Naples and waiting for our comrades to find us a house to rent, we did not miss the opportunity to visit Pompeii, the ancient city that was destroyed and covered in ashes after the eruption of Vesuvius, the volcano that is located near Naples and beautifies its landscape. This most destructive explosion took place in AD 79 and since then, until 1592, the city was buried under the earth. This had the result that it did not develop and today, after many years of work to uncover the ruins, it is one of the best preserved archaeological sites, where one can get an idea of what Roman cities were like two thousand years ago.

Sophia and I were lucky enough not to have to pay a ticket to see the ruins of this ancient city, because we unintentionally got involved with the children of a primary school brought on a school trip to Pompeii, with the consequence that the employees of the archaeological site not to issue us a ticket. This, in one sense, was not good, because with this ticket we would also visit the "Villa of the Mysteries" which is known for its very well-preserved frescoes. However, we saw frescoes in other mansions of this city, so we got an idea of how the ancient Romans painted. I assume that the ancient Greeks would also paint accordingly, since culturally they were very close to the Romans.

Until we visited Pompeii, the only idea we had of painting in ancient Greece was what we had seen painted on vases. Anyway, among all the buildings we visited, I was most impressed by the brothel which, despite its small size, was also decorated with murals, pornographic ones as they would say today.

I have never seen such well-preserved ruins of an ancient city since. And not only ruins but also petrified corpses of people who had the misfortune of being trapped and unable to escape, when the city was bombarded by mud, stones and ashes. I was particularly impressed by the streets of the city, which give an idea of the general urban layout of the area.

Another thing I won't forget from our visit to Pompeii is some school children who, because we gave them the impression of tourists, asked us where we were from. I won't forget them because, when we told them we were from Greece, they didn't know it at all and, wanting to attribute a country of origin to us, they insisted that we were from America! We could not imagine that Greece, although a neighboring country to Italy, was unknown to primary school children! After the experience of Glasgow, where comrade Hugh's wife did not know Greece, this experience of Naples began to bring us down to earth so that we understood how insignificant Greece was to Europeans.

In the courtyard of a mansion in Pompeii

In Pompeii with the school children behind me with whom we entered the archaeological field together and that's why we didn't pay

The feeling of becoming a burden to your comrades – The end of our adventure in Italian south

We slept a total of two nights at the house of Immacolata and her mate. Then we were sent to stay at the house of another fellow, Francesco, nicknamed "Lungo", meaning long, which was also in the old town that ends at the port. There Francesco lived with his young wife and their child, a little girl. From what he had told us, this apartment, also in an old apartment building, was a legal squat that the Municipality of Naples, to which it belonged, had sold it to the squatters with favorable payment terms. With Francesco and his car we went to one of the most famous parks in the city, Posillipo, which is located on an elevated part of the city and therefore has a nice view. What we remember most about Posillipo is not the view but the rows of parked cars in the park's streets, which had their windows covered with newspapers. Since we had never seen anything like this before, we asked Francesco why they did this and he told us that they did it because inside the cars various couples were making love and that's why they didn't want to be seen from the outside. I confess that I could not, until then, imagine that some people would feel romantic in a park under such conditions, so as to make love!

At Francesco Lungo's house we stayed only two nights, because our presence disturbed his child, as he told us. I do not doubt the discomfort that the little girl felt, but I did not like this behavior of the comrade at all. We hadn't been to Naples on vacation and we didn't even know that the person who had invited us wouldn't undertake to find us a house to stay in until we rented. Anyway, our fifth night in Naples, we spent it in a rather rich house of a comrade who lived high up on the horseshoe, so to speak, that this city forms with the houses that are built on the hillsides that surround it. He, somehow, was forced to take us to his house, so the next morning, he told us that he was expecting his in-laws and that's why we had to leave. So, we left. And we left not only the house of the comrade but also the city itself, where we were "passed" from one to the other. Before we got to the train station to take the train back to Perugia, they called us and said they had found us a house to rent for 100.000 Italian liras a month, at a ground floor of a building in the Spanish quarter. We did not pay attention, because we knew that the Spanish quarter was the most degraded quarter of the city and was full of brothels, which served, among others, the American sailors of the 6th fleet. Certainly not large brothels, because these had been abolished in Italy, as in Greece, as early as the 1960s, but small houses of commercial love.

Before we boarded the train to leave Naples, we were stopped by a young man, who insisted that we give blood, in a hospital car parked outside the station. The fact that we were not Italian and that he stopped us at the time we were going to take the train to leave, didn’t matter at all. We had a difficult time till he let us go!

Translated from Greek to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com

Our trip to Naples was the last we made in Italy, while we were in Perugia. It must have been April 1986, because on our way back to Greece, we were overtaken by the radioactive cloud from the biggest nuclear accident in history: the explosion of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in Ukraine. The explosion happened on April 26, 1986. Before we left Perugia, our friend Vangelis from Chalandri appeared in the city, to whom we had told that we could host him. The bad thing is that he showed up at the time we were leaving so he couldn't stay at our house as long as he would have liked. Before a week had passed since his appearance, we had left with Sehidis' bus, but we had persuaded our friends Litsa and Michalis to accommodate him. He stayed there for a few more days.

RETURN TO GREECE AND STRUGGLES FOR FINAL EXEMPTION FROM THE ARMY

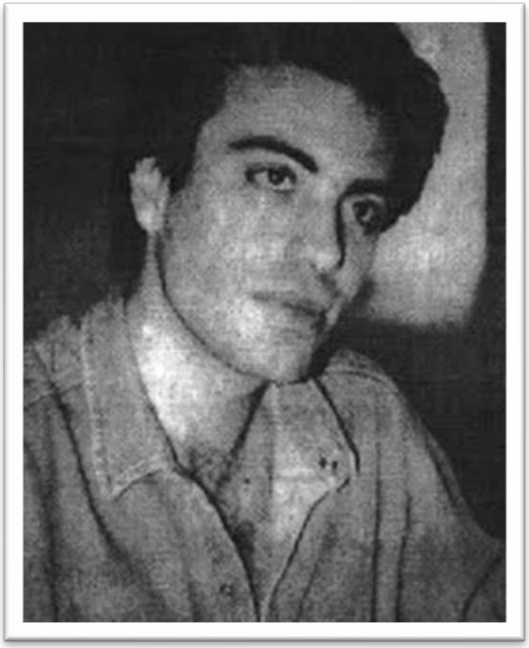
The explosion of the nuclear plant in Chernobyl, Ukraine, the anti-nuclear movement and the end of a long-standing friendship and cooperation

The radioactive cloud found us as we crossed the Veneto, the province of Italy whose capital is Venice. We, of course, did not understand any radioactive cloud, we just learned about its passage from the newspapers. What we felt crossing the Veneto was a cloudy sky with unusual heat for the season. Luckily, we didn't fall into radioactive rain.

We fell into radioactive rain at some point in early May while waiting for a bus in Melissia. There was no shelter at the bus stop, so we received some radioactive rain. Fortunately, I haven't had anything related to it since then, even though it's been a full thirty-two years or so.

In Greece where we returned, in addition to the panic that fell on the world when it heard that the radioactive rain would contaminate the products of the countryside, with the consequence that they would not buy many of them, there were also anti-nuclear demonstrations, which the police violently suppressed. In one of them, a hooded man threw a Molotov cocktail at a traffic policeman, while he was passing on a motorcycle through Omonoia square. The engine caught fire and the policeman fell from it. This incident resulted in heavy repression by the police and the arrest of many people. Some of them were taken to prisons and after some time went on hunger strike. Then we also joined the support movement for the "anti-nuclear" hunger strikers and we were in Propylaea every day. There, having secured a loudspeaker, we read every now and then a text from the four-page newspaper "The Anarchist" that had started to be published at that time. And of course, the hunger strikers did not have sympathizers only in Propylaea. A support movement developed throughout Athens and in other large provincial cities, such as Thessaloniki. Sophia and I were not content with merely participating in the solidarity movement. Together with three other comrades, Maroula, Panos and Giannis, Maroula's brother, we formed a group and issued a proclamation on the subject of the anti-nuclear hunger strike struggle. We handed it out some days in Propylaea, but one Sunday, I think, Sophia and I couldn't get downtown, from Melissia, where we lived, to Propylaea, with the consequence that Maroula handed it out alone, or with Panos. The fact that we did not go downtown annoyed Maroula so much that she attacked me fiercely. I, invoking my past struggles, objected to her that she cannot judge me so negatively because she had not contributed as much to the movement as I had. I distinctly remember saying for her who judged me: “Who? Maroula!". This bothered her, or seemed to bother her so much so, that from then on Maroula broke off her relations with us, even though they had lasted for years. At least we didn't break up with her brother, Giannis.

In general, our mobilization in Propylaea went well. But it stopped abruptly, when one day, a former prisoner of the common penal code, whom my one-time fellow prisoner Giorgos Apostolopoulos had warned me to be careful of, Giorgos Koutselas, came with some people and took the loudspeaker from us, with the excuse that they would tour around the neighborhoods of Athens by car and would shout for the strikers with the loudspeaker. Fortunately, all the hunger strikers were finally released and we can say that the mobilizations had an effect. And as for the leaflets we made about the anti-nuclear activists, apart from the quarrel with Maroula, they also gave us the opportunity to meet a comrade, who would write history in the future: Christophoros Marinos.



Christophoros a few years later. When we met him he had long hair till his shoulder

Since then he was so committed to the movement that, before the anti-nukes came out, he had taken our leaflets to hand out in the western suburbs, like New Philadelphia, where he had some connections.

Arrest of Katerina Iatropoulou and fugitive lifers Petropoulos and Temberekidis – A brochure that came out in the absence of the group that undertook to produce it

After the end of the mobilizations for the anti-nuclear demonstrators that cost us the loss of Maroula's friendship, we left Athens and came to our relative's house on a beach in Attica, to take a sea bath. But we wouldn't have time to take many sea baths, because one night we saw on the TV news that our lawyer in the past, Katerina Iatropoulou, had been arrested for 10 grams of heroin found in her house after a search. We also heard that in the house she had hidden our fellow prisoners in the past Petropoulos and Temberekidis, who some time ago had spectacularly escaped from the Disciplinary Prison of Corfu. But they were not caught in the police raid on Iatropoulou's house. They were recaptured a short time later at another appartment. We, of course, never believed that Iatropoulou had a relationship with the heroine, who, according to her own words, must have been left at her house by some people posing as her friends.

The arrests of Iatropoulou, Petropoulos and Temberekides triggered a large movement of support, in which, as was expected, we also participated. In fact, one of our texts almost became the basis of a brochure that came out at that time about Petropoulos and Temberekides. Specifically, at the suggestion of our comrade and previous fellow hunger striker, Giannis Bouketsidis, we had gathered with others, twice, at the offices of the anti-authoritarian newspaper "Dokimi", which was then in Boulgaroktonou, at number 27. The second time it was agreed that each would bring a text, so that a brochure with a combination of the texts comes out. Unfortunately, the only ones who brought a text were me and Sophia and although many accepted it, it was ultimately ignored and the brochure was produced by people unknown to me, who did not attend the two meetings. In the second of these, my former fellow prisoner and friend Thodoros Tsouvalakis, in front of the audience, said that I had no place in the movement and that I had better go home. Fortunately, Nota was also present at the assembly, whose brother, Christos Tsoutsouvis, had been killed by the police a year or so earlier, and she fulminated against Tsouvalakis, for the way he spoke about a well-known activist like me. Tsouvalakis, although he was in prison as prisoner of the common penal code, had the claim to expel from the assembly of anti-authoritarians a man who was in prison as an anarchist. "The wild have come to drive out the tame", as they say!

The brochure that came out from people unknown to us was shown to us one of the following days by Bouketsidis in Exarchia. When we protested about the undemocratic way it came out, Bouketsidis asked us to hear the opinion of Giannis Scandalis, who happened, that evening, to be sitting with a big company in Exarchia square. Scandalis told us that the brochure came out well in this way and

the issue was closed there!

The tapes of Nikolas Asimos and the concert with Pulikakos in Lycabettus

In one of the demonstrations for Iatropoulou, Nikolas Asimos who was marching behind us, stopped me and gave me the tapes with his songs that he had made while I was in prison and later. Until then I only had his first tape. It seems, after the support concert for Moiras and Danatos, Asimos was no longer angry with me, as he was when I didn't talk to him after the fuss with Sophia about Panionio's money. In fact, at that time, i.e. the summer of 1986, there was a concert at the theater of Lycabettus, where Dimitris Poulikakos sang, to whom Asimos introduced me. I wasn't used and I still am not used to go to concerts, because I don't like the crowds and because I don't want to pay for a ticket, when, most of the time, I have a financial problem. But at that concert I had heard that they were going to put a banner on the stage about political prisoners (the anti-nuclear people must have been still be in prison). So I thought I might try to get in without paying. It seems that many others had the same thought and that is why, outside the bars that closed the entrance to the theater, there were many people pushing. From the middle of the railings, at that time, I saw Nikolas Asimos, who was wearing a placard that read "Nicolas Asimos". He succeeded and got the ticket inspectors to let me through without a ticket, and then led me to Poulikakos, who had already taken the stage, but had not yet begun to sing. When Asimos told him who I was, Poulikakos told me that he watched our struggle with interest, at the time I was in prison, because he had also spent many months in prison earlier, and that is why he had a special sensitivity about prisons. I was very happy at the time for the appreciation that Poulikakos had shown me, because I had already read a lot of good things about him in the magazines of Leonidas Christakis, whom I had the good fortune to have met personally in prison. I knew about Poulikakos that he was one of the few representatives of the "beat" culture that had arrived in Greece at the end of the 50s. I had already read Kerouac and Burroughs, so I had some appreciation for this culture.

I didn't talk much with Poulikakos, because the program had to start. I managed, however, to ask him to give an order, if he could, for the doors to be opened for the people without tickets to enter, because they were ready to cause trouble and be violently dispersed by the police. Poulikakos gave an order and the doors were opened for them, as a result of which the concert progressed smoothly. During the concert they raised the banner on stage, as I expected. I remember, in fact, that one of those who held it was Thodoros Tsouvalakis. The truth is that I didn't ask then Poulikakos at that stage to let enter the people without tickets, because I was worrying excessively about episodes. My concern was not excessive, because in the past there had been big classes

between the people without tickets and the police in Lycabettus, at a concert by "Trypes" or "Fatme" (I don't remember anymore), as they had tried to enter the theater by force. In those episodes, Katerina Gogou was also severely beaten, whom, in the following days, I convinced to file a complaint with the police. This lawsuit was written by me and we had gone together to file it with the competent Prosecutor's Office. I never found out what happened, but our "job" was, more or less, done, because newspaper photographers had come to the court and photographed Gogou with obvious marks from the beating on her face. This is how the abuse of Gogou became more widely known, about which no one would have learned anything if the lawsuit had not been filed.

Iatropoulou did not stay "inside" for long. She didn't even go to jail. After a few days she was released on bail of 700,000 drachmas, a very large amount for that time, which was offered by the famous Greek film director Nikos Koundouros.

The "Women's Prison of Korydallos" and getting to know the new Security Police Headquarters (G.A.D.A.)

That summer, before most shops closed for the holidays, we managed to print Sophia's book "Korydallos Women's Prison". We printed it at my mother's older brother Tasos' printing press, which was more or less outdated. It was in a basement in Geraniou street. It was a printing shop with a printing press from the 1940s and a linotype machine that my uncle had bought in the early 60s with the dowry money he got when he got married. My uncle, in addition to working that old press, did the typesetting together with one of his other workers. That is, he put the slugs with the words embossed on one side, as they came out of the linotype machine, one next to the other in a wooden frame, which made up the page. He had to read the words backwards, because the paper would be pressed against them to print them correctly. The test "essays", as they were called, on which the corrections were made, were printed on continuous paper, a roll. I had undertaken to make the corrections myself, and since my uncle was in a hurry to close for the summer holidays, I had been forced to do them "standing", in his printing office. And he didn't give us payment facilities either. But he introduced us to someone else who made the so-called, at that time, "clichés" with which the photos were printed, and a bookbinder. They both did a good job and the book was printed in about 1000 copies, very few of which we had to withdraw. It was self-published, but we managed to get the publishing house "Eleftheros Typos" of Giorgos Garbis, who was a comrade and had sent us many of his books for free in prison, to take over the central distribution. Nevertheless I used to go round the bookshops and leave it on deposit and then I would go over to see what had been sold. Back then, fortunately, booksellers could still take books without invoices.

After the book was published, that same summer, we were unlucky enough to be caught again by the police. Not for anything serious and that's why we were released without questioning. A prohibited gathering was taking place in the Propylaea and the police were lined up around it, denying access to the interior, where the fountains are. In the interior, which was now blocked by the police, some comrades had already gathered inside. It was not the first forbidden demonstration in the Propylaea in those days and we who then lived in Melissia had previously descended unjustly, without being able to enter, passing our time walking around. That time I decided not to idly turn back and only see the others inside, like the Asimos whom I remember calling me in. That's why, in a moment that I saw a gap in the cordon of the policemen, I ran to get inside. I went in but they ran after me and caught me. As I was being led to the Black Maria, Sophia started shouting to the assembled journalists who I was, so that they would know who was caught, and trying to get me away from the cops. Thus she was also caught. Inside the Black Maria, a young policeman threatened to beat me up, but in the end I avoided the beating. They took us to G.A.D.A., the huge building in Alexandras, where we had never been before. After they kept us in an office for a couple of hours until the mobilization was over, they let us go. We returned to the Propylaea, where we found, among others, Eleni Dimoulea, who told us that, while we were inside, she had made several phone calls to them to let us go. The next day some newspapers wrote about our arrest and protested about it.

Byron's hangout, the newspaper "Antithesis" and the long-lived publication "The Anarchist"

It must have been at that time, but I don't remember exactly when, that we met some guys who had turned a basement in Byron into an anarchist hangout. We had been there a couple of times and had talked a lot with them. One of them, Dimitris Troaditis, had a great sense of humor and we saw him quite often, because he passed by the office of the anarchist lawyer, Vassilis Karaplis, who was the "heart" of the publication "The Anarchist". With this publication we collaborated for some issues but in the end we left for reasons that I will mention below. Byron's hangout also published a newspaper called "Antithesis". In it, Sophia also published a two-page article related to the Greek Justice. Apart from Dimitris, the team that produced the paper included Giannis Sophianopoulos, Panagiotis and Alekos Parapodas. And they, too, used to pass by Vassilis Karapli's little office, at Aristidou, as well as another comrade we met then, Mitsos. Sometimes so many people would gather in this little office, which consisted of only one room and that was full of books and newspapers, that half of them would be inside standing and the others outside in the corridor. The discussions, however, were always noisy. We evidently had a great idea of our abilities to influence the anarchist public by publishing the

paper I mentioned earlier. Back then it was still coming out of the printing press. Later, after we had left, it was photocopied.

In one of these discussions, which concerned the content of the newspaper, there was a strong disagreement between Achilles, a journalist who also participated in the newspaper, and Sophia, over an article by Sophia with the title: The good taxi drivers and Salome . It referred to a thief nicknamed Salome, who, when taxi drivers fell for her because of her beauty, would pretend that she gives in and was taken to their house, or to a house in general, to have sex with them. There she put them to sleep and stole from them. Sophia in the article defended Salome, saying that the taxi drivers asked for it because they had the requirement to satisfy themselves sexually with a girl they found (certainly, they would not like other taxi drivers to do this to their wife or daughter). Achilles considered Salome a criminal and disagreed with the publication of the article. It was the first time that an article would be cut from the "Anarchist" and that's why we ended up with a vote among the members of the editorial team. The majority favored publication, but Achilles insisted on putting a note above the article saying that not all the editorial team agreed. Since something like this had never happened before, we also put this proposal of Achilles to a vote and the majority decided not to include the note. It should be noted that Achilles was also responsible for the technical part, i.e. the printing of the newspaper.

This story took on dimensions and forced me, Sophia and another comrade, Giannis Kantarakis, with whom we had also issued the proclamation for the anti-nuclear protesters, to leave the "Anarchist". Specifically, the story developed as follows: Karaplis left for abroad and left the newspaper in the care of Achilles. Achilles was busy, he had no money, and he let us and Giannis take the newspaper to print. We, before the newspaper was printed, saw that the note with the disagreement of members of the editorial team had been added above Sophia's article, despite the decision not to be added, which had been taken by the majority. We made sure to remove it since it wasn't supposed to go in. And indeed the newspaper circulated with a blank where the note was. But later, on the next issue of the newspaper, which was distributed at the cemetery, where the memorial service was held for the one year anniversary of the murder of fifteen-year-old Michalis Kaltezas, there was a note accusing us of violating the rules of fellowship and arbitrarily censoring the newspaper. Fortunately, without mentioning our names. This bothered us very much because it was a lie and that lie was included in the issue of newspaper that was distributed over Kaltezas' grave. The memorial had a lot of people and over the grave was sung the song of Asimos "Even if they hit us with mortars and cannons". The "Anarchist" being handed out with slanders against us at such a circumstance, I considered it "sacrilege". When, in fact, we later found Karaplis and he told us that he agreed with this slander, we understood, me, Sophia and Giannis, that we had no place in the "Anarchist" anymore, since the "heart" of the publication, Karaplis , was against us.

But I am a person who, as much as I can, do not let the injustices done to me pass like this. That is why Sophia and Giannis Kantarakis and I wrote a letter to the newspaper "Dokimi" which was then published by anti-authoritarians, as I said above, where we told things as they happened and blamed the editors of the "Anarchist" for the way it operated the newspaper. The letter took months to be published, because on the one hand, the editorial staff of "Dokimi" did not know who sent it, they could only assume, and on the other hand, they did not want the inadequacies and malfunctions of our milieu to be known. And it would never have been published, if at some event in the school complex of Grava, somewhere in Kypseli, we did not find Theodoros Pisimisis, who at the time appeared as legally responsible for the newspaper, and we told him that we had sent the letter and insisted on the its publication. Although the letter was eventually published, it caused such disagreements within the newspaper's editorial team that inasmuch until then "Dokimi" had boasted of publishing complaints without censorship, since then it was decided to publish only letters approved by the editorial team. This was written on the "Dokimi" issue where our letter was published.

The censorship of the letter about the Prison Psychiatrist Maratos and its implications

The adventure of this letter was nothing compared to the adventure of another letter, which Sophia and I had sent in March 1987 to the journal "Psychiatric Notebooks" published by the psychiatrists of the largest psychiatric hospital in the country, the psychiatric hospital located in Dafni. This concerned the psychiatrist of Korydallos' prisons, Marios Maratos, whom we accused of many things. The fact that had prompted us to send that letter was Maratos' participation as a speaker at an event of the Open Psychotherapeutic Center, on the subject of the legalization of Indian cannabis. Previously, the psychiatrist Giorgos Oikonomopoulos had smoked a cigarette with Indian cannabis in public, at another event, and this had cost him an arrest and a prison sentence. He was out, due to the fact that the appeal he made against the first court conviction had a suspensive effect until its judgment. Maratos at this event had defended the decriminalization of Indian cannabis, but we who happened to attend, considered it a challenge to participate in such events representatives of power who are accused of so many unpunished crimes, such as Maratos. Our letter about Maratos was published in the magazine, but when the Board of Directors of the association of psychiatrists of Daphni saw this, they decided to tear the page with the letter from all issues of the magazine. So the magazine was released with the relevant sheet torn. We, however, were lucky enough to get our hands on a copy of the magazine with the wrong page torn. So we saw our letter in print. And as we learned from the next issue of the magazine, those responsible for printing the magazine (among whom must have been the psychiatrist Katerina Matsa who politically belonged to the Internationist Workers Union, which had supported us while we were in prison) brought the issue in the general meeting of the union and neral meeting did not approve the

decision of the Board of Directors, leading the Board of Directors to resign, to hold elections and the new Board of Directors, which was elected, to side with the editorial staff of the magazine who printed our letter.

The multi-day hunger strike of Christos Roussos and the hunger strike for support for him in the Propylaea of the University of Athens

In November 1986 we got a letter from the lifer Christos Roussos, who was in prison because, about ten years earlier, when he was doing his military service as a sailor in the navy, he had killed another sailor with whom he had had an affair. From the letter, which he had sent to about three hundred recipients, it emerged that his sentence was too heavy, because the victim was mistreating him, and that, considering that he had spent enough time in prison, he was starting a hunger strike asking for a pardon from the President of the Republic. Although I had not met Russos in prison, I immediately decided to support his righteous struggle. During the hunger strike, he was transferred, after several days of hunger strike, to the Janeio hospital in Piraeus. There he continued his strike under guard, but the surveillance was relaxed and Sophia and I were given the opportunity to get to know him in person. He seemed like a very sweet person to me, but I was also very impressed by his parents who were there. Very kind people. There I also met Grigoris Vallianatos, an activist for gay rights, who was already widely known at that time. Judging by how young he looked to me then, compared to today, and the fact that we are the same age, I must have looked much younger then too. Something I realize now, every time I look at my face in the mirror.

Roussos continued the strike and had reached approximately 70 days, being on the verge of death, with the President of the Republic Sargetakis, known as a democratic judge since the Lambrakis case of 1963, persistently refusing to pardon him. Then a number of "intellectuals" and political activists decided to start a hunger strike in Propylaea to support Roussos. They started shortly before Roussos' case was brought back to the President of the Republic to sign the pardon. In this group of hunger strikers, Giannis Bouketsidis, with whom we had done so many hunger strikes in prison together, had the brilliant idea to add us too, namely Bouketsidis, Sophia and me. Although I would not have taken such an initiative on my own, because I had no connection with those who would go on strike in Propylaea, I accepted after Bouketsidis' prompting. But, at the last moment, Bouketsidis backed out and Sophia and I found ourselves starting the strike without him. Fortunately Bouketsidis took care and found a tent for us, so that we wouldn't have to sleep under the stars. And surprisingly, when Sophia and I started the strike, a girl we didn't know at all came and found us in the Propylaea, who offered to go on a hunger strike with us, without having any reason to be considered an "intellectual" or political activist. So, while the hunger strike

lasted in Propylaea, I found myself sleeping with two women in the same tent. Unfortunately today I am no longer sure of her name, I think she was called Nancy, but I remember that, after the strike ended, a comrade, Charalambidis, who had also gone inside at the time we were inside, because he had been caught with a molotov in his bag, he told me he knew her from some case that had gone to court and he considered her a suspect. I, however, could not imagine that she could do any harm by striking with us, except that, as the three of us did not sit with the famous, it would appear that we were unknown to the public, like her. Which I didn't mind at all, because I always had a prejudice against those who become famous in the context of such an irrational, inhuman and criminal society.

This hunger strike was, in general, interesting. Every day a lot of people gathered in the Propylaea to support the strikers and Roussos. There I also met Maria Petroulaki, who told us that she had heard from her mate Michalis Protopsaltis the best words for us, there I met the well-known old revolutionary Michalis Raptis (Pablo), who was the only one who approached us to ask us because we weren't sitting near the other strikers, that's where I first saw Paola, the gay rights activist we'd met in Venice, dressed as a woman, that's where I last saw Giorgos Georgantonakis, the oldcalendarist priest I'd met in prison, who at that time he had dedicated his life to feeding and helping the homeless in general, having founded a relevant organization. I later saw a relevant report on TV about his charity work. Even an old comrade, one of those we had in the discussions at the hangout at Valtetsiou 23, in 1977, and I had worked one day in construction work with him then, Giorgos Kavatzas (nickname), I saw again there after a long time. He pretended he didn't know me, so I didn't talk to him until I heard him contest that anarchists were also involved in the hunger strike. I pointed out that he was wrong, because Sophia and I were involved, and we were, no doubt, known as anarchists.

During the strike in Propylaea, albeit belatedly, the anarchists decided to hold a demonstration to protest the attitude of the President of the Republic who refused to pardon Roussos. Among the supporters of the president was the newspaper "Avriani", which on the front page of the time wrote that we who were on strike "were on strike for Roussos' "ass" (sic). The anarchists were not alone in the demonstration and they did not organize it. It was organized by many groups of the extra-parliamentary left and I imagine that the "youth of the Coalition of the Left" was not missing either, as the current "youth of Syriza" was then known. But the anarchists, in order to show that they are more militant than the others, after the end of the march that followed the usual route Propylaea-Omonoia-Syntagma-Propylaea, decided not to disperse and occupy the Panepistimiou avenue. This fact, because it created the risk of violent dispersal of the demonstrators by the police, angered the most "politicized" of the original hunger strikers, such as Giorgos Karabelias and Nikos Giannopoulos. Since they also monopolized the

imicrophone of the sound installation set up for the hunger strikers, they found at that stage the opportunity to pour out from the microphone all their hatred towards the anarchists, a hatred that all communists always harbor for the anarchists. Bolshevik style. This led me to have a serious conversation for the first time with George Karabelias who presented the anarchists as provocateurs, which gave him the opportunity to tell me that he had faced a similar problem with the anarchists when I was in and he with his collective he supported us. Although I never valued the avowed communist Karabelias as a comrade, I must confess that, as I have written before, at the time I was inside he had the courage to read in meetings the text we had drawn up to argue that we were inside for political reasons and not like criminal prisoners, and that is why the solidarity movement had to treat us as such. Unfortunately for him, much later he developed into a fanatical nationalist.

After three or four days of hunger strike in Propylaea, Sargetakis again rejected the request for pardon of Roussos and Roussos, in order not to die, was forced to stop the strike, which had exceeded 70 days. The strikers of Propylaea also stopped the strike. All that happened later for Roussos was an assembly in some hall of the Polytechnic University (N.T.U.A.), where those who felt important proposed ideas for supporting Roussos from then on. Everyone said, as usual, "the long and the short", but no one proposed any mobilization. That's why, before the assembly broke up, I jumped in and said that we should have at least one demonstration outside the prison, to show that there is still a support movement. No one agreed to discuss such a "radical" proposal, from someone as insignificant as me to these grand leftists, except Nikos Giannopoulos, who since then managed with his public relations to have the first and last word. And what did he say to me? Basically nothing: I should go to discuss what I want in his offices and not in the assembly. Was he afraid of being carried away by me the five hundred or so people who had gathered? I do not think so. He just wanted to show me that the crowd that had gathered in the assembly was his and therefore only from him could I expect something and not from the crowd. In conclusion, I want to point out that from my experiences of assemblies like that, where the crowd behaved like sheep towards their shepherd, I understood that such assemblies have no meaning and are held only to legitimize the preconceived decisions of their leaders.

Faced with military service again – “The struggle to be human"

This year, 1987, was the end of the two-year deferment I had received from the 401 General Military Hospital in 1985. This was my biggest concern. At the time I was still hoping that I would get an exemption for mental health reasons (treloharto) and leave with Sophia to live abroad forever. I was listening to other comrades who had received exemption and I hoped that the same would happen to me. After all, I always made sure to secure some papers from doctors, which would allow the military authorities to release me on health grounds. Until that was done, I was devoting my time to translating an excellent book on crime, criminology and anarchism, "The struggle to be human", which its editor, Stuart Christie, had sent me for free when I was in prison. Hoping to publish this book in Greek, as there was no other book on anarchist views on prisons, I believed that its publication would turn the interest of anarchists towards prisons, something I have always been interested in since I was inside the prison. On the other hand, this translation was for me an offer to the anarchist movement (I would not ask for money for the work I did), to which, at that time, I wanted to offer the best I could. Also, it was a very good opportunity to practice my English which I always considered insufficient in relation to the time and money I had spent to learn it. Certainly, then I could not imagine that there is no meritocracy neither in publishing nor in the movement and therefore, if a publisher does not see the possibility of profit from a book or you do not belong to a financially powerful clique of the movement, even if it is the best book, no one else will publish it but you. Many years have passed since that time and therefore a lot has changed. Among those things that changed for the better the life of many (and not all because some pay dearly for it) is the appearance of the internet, which gives you the possibility, whatever you write or translate, to be able to make it immediately available to others, even if they are "at the end of the world". It is enough for them to find a connection with internet. At the time I am referring to, in 1987, personal computers were not even widespread in Greece and if some lucky ones had some of the first ones to arrive in Greece, most people were unaware of this wonderful invention. My uncle Meltos must have been one of the first to get a computer for his children, because I remember that in his house there was a computer in the form of a keyboard and connected to the TV (probably a Commodore 64). I remember they used it to play games on TV.

Call to report to serve in the army in Tripoli and transfer to the 401 military hospital by ambulance

The invitation I was waiting for from the army came in April of this year. I was called to 401 General Military Hospital. I went with diagnoses from the doctors of Eginitio and Dromokaiteio and also went through the military psychiatrist of the 401, who suggested that I be permanently released from my military obligation due to "chronic severe neurosis". And yet the 401 Exemption Committee, without examining me more than asking me a couple of questions (specifically: what work did I do and where did I get the deferment from two years ago), found me able to serve normally (I1, in their terminology, while exemption is I5, and this was what the military psychiatrist had requested). I did not immediately take into my hands the decision of the committee. I got it after a few months. And was shocked! Perhaps I shouldn't have been so worried then, because the commission suggested that I report to Tripoli and from there be sent to a military hospital. From what I later heard from others, the exemption was obtained after they had previously reported to the military hospital in Tripoli. But I have never been like the others in terms of tolerance of gross injustice against me. I considered the decision of the Exemption Committee to be completely unjust and unreasonable and, fearing that in provincial Tripoli I might encounter fascist torturers, such as those that the dictatorship of 1967-1974 had produced and are never missing from the army and the police, I decided to don't go to Tripoli. My fear that the army was plotting my extermination was such that as soon as I heard the commission's decision I decided to keep a diary of what I would go through in the future. In this diary I would also add references to my daily life as well as references to the news of the era that interested me. Finally, I intended to develop some of my thoughts as well. The reason I wanted to add all this to my diary was that I did not have access to anarchist magazines and newspapers and the only way I had to spread my views to the general public until then was to write letters to the daily Athenian newspapers "Eleftherotypia" and "The News". I felt that I had many interesting things to say, and if I collected them in such a book, they would not go to waste.

The day I had to report to Tripoli was the tenth of August. Instead of going to Tripoli, having weakened the body by severe fasting so as to be unfit for military training, I managed with the help of my brother to be taken by ambulance to 401, so as to escape the consequences of not appearing in Tripoli. According to the summons from the army that I had received, in order not to report, you had to be hospitalized in a state hospital or report to the Garrison of the town and ask to be examined by their own doctor, who would certify that you are sick. My brother had gone to the Garrison and asked for a doctor to be sent to my house, as I was so

weak that I could not move. From there they told him to transfer me to 401. The bad thing is that the "First Aid", as the E.K.A.B. was then called, did not accept the Garisson's paper and my brother had a difficult time until he convinced the ambulance driver to pick me up. My brother and Sophia came with me in the ambulance.

At 401 I ended up on a bench outside the military psychiatrist's office, waiting with hundreds of others to be examined. He might not have examined me at all that day and asked me to appear the next day, as had happened in 1985 when I got the defferal. Meanwhile there came and found me my own psychiatrist, who had taken it upon himself to accompany me to 401. Seeing the psychiatrist and my brother waiting and indignant with this whole scene of futile waiting, the moment I had come by ambulance and had to be treated as an emergency, I lay down in front of the psychiatrist's office door. But no one paid any attention to me and those who came to be examined, passed over me, as if nothing was happening, until Sophia entered the office and asked the sergeant who was guard to inform the doctor. The guard ushered her out and the crowd continued to pass over me until Sophia re-entered the office. The sergeant took her out again, but he must have finally informed the psychiatrist, because after a while he came and picked me up and put me in the office. So I ended up in a bed of those that examine patients. The psychiatrist who accompanied me also came in and gave the military psychiatrist, a Vouyoukas, the psychiatric diagnoses. I didn't speak at all, to make myself look worse than I really was. Without many words, the psychiatrist made his diagnosis, where he also asked for my exemption and sent me on a stretcher to a cardiologist, because I had a very fast heart rate. The latter managed to reduce it by applying pressure to my eyes and gave me an (expired, as it was usual in the army) medication for the tachycardia. They let me go with the prospect that the Exemption Committee would decide another day. My brother took the diagnosis of the military psychiatrist to the Garrison and thus my non-appearance in Tripoli was justified.

The brutal murder of Panagiotis Ganglias who had managed to be convicted the chief warden and the psychiatrist of the Korydallos Prison Psychiatric Hospital

On August 18th, going down from Melissia to Athens on business, I saw on the front page of some newspapers the face of Panagiotis Ganglias and I read that the pieces of the body that the dogs of a shepherd found thrown in some fields near Achladokampos belonged to him. I admit I was shocked. I may not have been in touch with him, but I couldn't imagine such a fate for a prisoners' rights activist who not only had the courage to testify against the guards in court about the beating I got from them in 1981 while in prison , i.e. in their hands, but he had also managed to be sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for drug trafficking in the psychiatric hospital the chief warden of the Prisoners' Psychiatric Hospital of Korydallos Efthimiou and the psychiatrist Papanastasiou of the same psychiatric hospital. Needless to say, despite the convictions, both were out awaiting the Court of Appeal. Before the trial in the Court of Appeal, Ganglias was murdered and the Court of Appeal acquitted them. When he was killed, Ganglias was 38 years old.

I did not expect that they would manage to kill Ganglias. As I had known him, having spent his life since he was a child in reformatories and prisons, he knew how to maneuver. I thought he was too smart to be killed. But he wasn't. I say this because the last time I had heard of him, was when he had offered a dinner at the "Ideal" restaurant, in Panepistimiou, to Sophia and Giannis Scandalis. With him was a former criminal prisoner, Kartelias, who when we were in the Korydallos prison hospital had made a fuss of me, Scandalis and Bouketsidis, because we were talking through the window to Sophia who was on the upper floor, and had also said to John Petropoulos that he would have beaten me, if it was not John protecting me. How clever was Ganglias to eat at the same table with a man who, in prison, had opposed the political prisoners, something only ruffians, i.e. prisoners who cooperated with the prison service, did?

Later, after several years, in 1994 I think, a journalist from the TV station ANT 1, who was preparing a two-hour special, two episodes, about Ganglias, came to my house in Athens, where I was living at the time, and interviewed me. I succeeded, and he brought out in his report the names of the people Ganglias had succeeded in convicting, because I kept a file of newspaper clippings. The journalist, in my house, in addition to me, made sure that the clippings were also videotaped. In the interview I attributed Ganglia's killing to his inability to find protection from a prisoner movement that would cover those prisoners who denounced guards. Although many years have passed since then and a lot of people of the left and

anti-authoritarians have been involved with prisons, I don't think there is such a movement, that's why all the guards who were arrested for torturing to death an Albanian prisoner, namely Ilyr Kareli, some years before, are all out of prison. The interview I gave to the TV station ANT 1 was my only interview with a Greek TV station that saw the light of day. I had been invited once more to give an interview about the prisoners at the ANT 1 offices in the Great Britain Hotel but that interview was never aired as far as I know. At least that's how I entered this most luxurious historical hotel in Athens for the first time and I think the last time. Its interior reminded me of a palace. Finally, regarding Ganglias, in order to close his file and stop looking for his killers, eight or nine years after his murder, they arrested a taxi driver whom they charged with five murders, including Ganglias'. They locked him in prison and before the trial they killed him in prison. Thus, no police was and will never be again concerned with the murder of such an important figure for the prisoners' rights movement.

Michalis Maragakis' struggle for the recognition of conscientious objection and the establishment of social service in place of military service

Those who have "lived" at that time, i.e. watched what was happening in Greece in 1987, will remember that finally in Greece, from the previous year (1986), a conscientious objector had appeared for non-religious reasons (he was not a Witness of Jehovah) and almost all of 1987 he was in prison. It was Michalis Maragakis, the first non- religious conscientious objector, whom, several years later, I also met personally and collaborated politically with. Maragakis was sentenced to 4 years in prison as an insubordinate and in prison he also went on long hunger strikes. At the time I presented myself to 401 he had just been released from prison only to be locked up again a short time later because he was drafted again into the army and he again refused to serve them. I systematically followed the progress of his case from the newspapers and admired him for his struggle. But he came from the political current of the environmentalists and not from the anarchists, and that's why I had no other contact with the support movement that was created for him, other than going to the support demonstrations, to which this movement called. Almost all of them were banned by the police, under the pretext that they would lead to riots. Completely arbitrary reason, because the police knew that the movement in support of Maragakis consisted of environmentalists and not of anarchists, who are known as rioters. At a gathering in the Propylaea for Maragakis, I saw for the first time the most famous of his supporters, Spyros Psychas, with whom I also met personally and worked with, some years later. He had made a great impression on me then, because his dress and the sweetness of his speech reminded me of a good boy and a good student of the era of the seven-year

dictatorship of the colonels and not a campaigner who used to address the public as if he were addressing soldiers, as it was the rule and still is to this day. Too bad I hadn't worked with the conscientious objectors since then. Like a fool, I thought that my attempt to get rid of the army would quickly be completed by taking "treloharto", as the anarchists had done until then. This effort was never completed and very few people knew about my struggle at the time: Those who collaborated with me. My struggle, that is, was personal and not political, while it might well have become more widely known as a political struggle, if from then on I chose conscientious objection, instead of exemption for reasons of mental health (''treloharto''). On the other hand, if I followed the attitude of Maragakis who presented himself to the army and was imprisoned, I too would have spent more years in prison.

The "Union of Anarchists of Greece" and the effort to create one organization competing with it

In the summer of 1987, some anarcho-communists who, although appearing as anarchists, were more communists than anarchists, had been organized around the newspaper "Dokimi" as the Union of Anarchists of Greece, after a supposedly secret conference held in a cinema in Athens. They invited whoever they wanted to this conference, leaving out important personalities of the movement, like Christos Konstantinidis, to whom a proclamation was later attributed stating that no conference took place. They didn't invite me and Sophia, because they obviously didn't want us. And they did well, because in the summer of 1987 the newspaper "Dokimi" published texts of the Italian urban guerrilla organization "Red Brigades", which in the previous decade had tried to provoke a civil war in Italy, carrying out a series of executions, kidnappings and robberies, the culmination of of which was the kidnapping and execution of Aldo Moro, president of the Christian Democratic Party, which had ruled Italy most of the time after the war. This organization intended to impose by a violent revolution a communist regime in Italy, such as that which at the same time had prevailed in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and, above all, in the superpower that supported these communist states : the People's Republic of China. In these countries all the anarchists were already either in the grave or in prison, and the same fate would have met with them in Italy if this organization had succeeded in its purpose. Apparently, the Union of Anarchists of Greece was making similar revolutionary plans and was therefore inspired by such proclamations. What followed its game with fire, we will see below.

I don't know exactly what the reasons were, because when an organization is based on secrecy such information does not get out and when it does get out, one should not relay it, but some members of the Union left quickly and they attempted to set up another organization, initially with no other ideological ties beyond

opposition to the Union. They decided to rent an apartment and start a round of discussions with the aim of creating an anarchist organization. I don't remember who invited me and Sophia to these discussions but I remember that, as long as we stayed in them, we were among the most responsible people to their obligations. The discussions took place on the first floor of the building in which the well-known tavern of the Exarchia "Barbagiannis" was housed and is still housed. I didn't like the idea of organizing myself in an organization in Greece, at a time when I still hadn't given up on the idea of staying abroad permanently. But it was difficult for me to refuse a proposal for struggle, when it came from comrades. Anyway, during the discussions, in which we participated, I also met interesting people, such as two women teachers. That people with university degrees and government jobs, and even women, took part in such discussions showed that interest in anarchy had reached the upper strata of the population, something very rare in the previous decade.

I don't remember the issues that were discussed and it was probably not organized work. Something difficult, of course, when more than twenty people gathered in the discussions. I remember, however, that there was a willingness. Willingness not only for discussions but also for practical work, as the apartment was old and needed a lot of maintenance. I also don't remember how many weeks or months we went into these discussions. But I do remember that because of an annoying dog that brought a, if I remember correctly, beautiful girl into the conversation, one night the conversation turned to the dog. There was also a couple in the discussion, of which the man was a partner of the publisher of the "Eleftheros Typos", Giorgos Garbis, and this resulted in Garbis hearing that our conversations were unreliable because we were talking about dogs. I attributed this slander to Garbis' associate and, at some point when we were in the apartment doing maintenance work, talking to a comrade from Peristeri, Giannis, I referred to Garbis' associate as a person who acts as Garbis' stool pigeon, as long as he goes and tells him our mistakes. This Giannis, a very good fellow, as I later ascertained, went and told this to Garbis' partner, with consequence that one of the following days when I passed by Garbis' bookstore to see how Sophia's book was doing, found Garbis very angry with me, as much as he had never been with me before nor he would be later. This scheming almost made me pick up Sophia's books from Garbi's bookstore and never speak to him again, but I've always been a practical person who didn't let emotions get in the way of my work. So I did not take the books and I continued to have good relations with Garbis, as we will see below, while Garbis' cooperation with the person who made him angry with me, after a few years, was interrupted. And a photosynthetic machine, which had been bought with Garbis' partner's money, was stolen one night from the bookstore. And even though it was insured, the insurance didn't cover the theft.

After a while we also left the discussion group which consisted of people who disagreed with the Union, without anything concrete coming out until then. We left

when we found that above our heads there was a kind of invisible authority that had the last word in this initiative rather than those who participated in the discussions. We found this out when one day we complained to the so-called "team leader" of the group, Aris, in the sense that he was the tallest and strongest and therefore respected in such environments. We complained that, at some point when we had gathered to do maintenance work on the apartment, as we were leaving, one of last year's anti-nuclear protestors (who, at the time he was on hunger strike, we protested about him every day in Propylaea), showed up along with two other strangers and, when Sophia told him that they couldn't stay because we were closing, he threatened her that next time they would come with molotov cocktails. The "team leader" took the side of the one who threatened to burn us, told us that it didn't matter that he didn't come to the discussions, since he was aware of this initiative before us, and therefore he had the right to stay with the strangers (who you could see them and get scared) in the apartment. At my insistence that the rules we had agreed upon as a group be respected, including that people who did not participate in the discussions cannot have rights, the "team leader" reacted by saying that I did not know about Exarchia, because the Exarchia of that time were not like the Exarchia that I had known in the 70s. With this the "team leader" made me understand that there was an authority higher than him and us, which we could not question. After that we did not go back to the discussions and, when one day we found in the square (Exarchia) Giannis, whom we knew from Byron's hangout and the newspaper "Antithesis", who also participated in the discussions, we explained to him the reasons for our departure and we asked him to convey them to the others as well. Can you tell me why we didn't raise the problem to the whole discussion group? We knew in advance that they would be afraid to mess with the "leader" and the one who threatened Sophia. We weren't completely irrelevant, regardless of whether we were having "midsummer night's dreams"...

The murder of Michalis Prekas and the arrest of Marinos, Smyrnaios, Boukouvalas and Vogiatzi

Before October came, the owner of the apartment we were renting in Melissia, asked us to leave, because she wanted it for owner-occupancy. She told us that her mother had died in Crete and that her father could not be left alone. That's why she would bring him to stay in our apartment. We were not financially able to pay rent for apartment in the northern suburbs, where the rents were too expensive for us, so we decided to go down to Athens. My uncle Meltos lived in the Neapoli area, near Exarchia, and that's why we thought of renting a house near him. His wife, an excellent person, found us a two-room apartment on the third floor of a by-street in Asklepiou, which belonged to a neighbour of hers. The neighbour’s parents lived

in this apartment before they died but now they had died and the apartment had been closed for many months, with their belongings inside. After pressure from my aunt, her neighbor decided to take some things from inside and rent it to us, leaving us the responsibility to throw away what we didn't want from the rest. That's what we did and painted the apartment ourselves again, because it definitely needed a painting. Fortunately, a friend helped us carry quite a few of our things from Melissia to Athens in his car, so when we brought a truck to take the rest, we didn't get stranded, as if we were packing everything at the last minute.

We were in the process of moving, when one night, as we were driving down to Athens in a friend's car, he told us that he had heard that the police had killed an anarchist. We hadn't taken anything for granted and that's why, when we got back to our house in Melissia, we started listening to the news on TV. To my great surprise, the television also showed the scene of his murder by the police and said that the anarchist was Michalis Prekas. They killed him as he had gone out on the balcony of an apartment and was shooting in the air. He had taken refuge in this apartment together with our acquaintance Christoforos Marinos, to escape the pursuit of the police, after the theft of a wireless telephone from a policeman's car. Christoforos Marinos was also caught in the apartment as an accomplice, while another comrade Klearchos Smyrnaios was found hiding under a taxi nearby. Him I knew from the offices of the "Dokimi" newspaper and I had seen him set the pace with his loudspeaker at the demonstrations . The surprise I felt was great, because I had known Prekas since we were together in the fourth wing of the prison of Aegina and was I who had first spoken to him about anarchy. I knew that he had been in the prison of Patras with another anarchist, the former editor of the "Dokimi" newspaper Theodore Pisimisis, when the latter served 9 months in prison for the squatt of Valtetsiou street of Exarchia, in 1981, which was one of the first in the history of Greece. But I did not know that he had become an anarchist or that he had a child with another anarchist of the 1970s, Vagelio Vogiatzi. In the following days, Vagelio Vogiatzi and another comrade, Makis Boukouvalas, were arrested and charged for the same case. On the day that I saw the execution of Prekas on a broadcast, the calendar read 1st October 1987.

In the following days, the organizers of the support for those arrested found that enough people were coming to the courts for support and thought of holding a meeting, to discuss the best organization of the support movement. The assembly took place in the old "Iris" cinema in the Academias street which I think belongs to the University of Athens. Outside the entrance to the "square" of the cinema, I met an old acquaintance of mine, Perakis, a close friend of Costas Abavis, Felekis' son-in- law, who, at the time I met Abavis and him, he was working as a builder. We even went on a trip to Agoriani with him and Abavis, when we were hanging out together. He, then, because I was a student and not a worker, told me that I would stop having

such, lets say, “revolutionary ideas” after I would finish my studies and get a job related to them because the students' interest in the revolution lasts while their studies last and, when they get the degree, they are absorbed by the system. I reminded this to him, therefore, when I met him again after so many years in "Iris", to show him that he had been wrong. Not only had I not ceased to have the same ideas, even though I had taken the degree, but I had served so many years in prison that he, as a worker, had not. Also, the workers we believed in in the mid-1970s had become bourgeoisie, i.e. they had houses, cars, vacations, etc. and the last thing on their mind was the revolution. It seems that the conversation I had with Perakis must have been quite interesting, because after a while Thodoros Pisimisis also took part, whose newspaper, "Dokimi", I did not fail to accuse of laborism. Pisimisis defended the newspaper's laborism, which I accused, and the discussion became so interesting that the best-known anarchist of the 70s, the "heart" of the "International Library", Christos Konstantinidis, decided to participate in it. It had been years since I had seen him last time. Konstantinidis was a great orator and with what he said about the failure of the German labor movement, which also denied the hopes of the Marxists, he won, so to speak, the show. The conversation ended when Konstantinidis left with Sylvia Papadopoulou, who, as long as he was talking, tried to take him away, telling him "Christos let’s go" and "Christos let’s go". This was also the last time I heard this great orator outing a speech.

Otherwise, the discussion inside "Iris" took a bad turn, because some insisted that those who considered the armed struggle right should come out and declare it. Because I considered this proposal provocative, I intervened and told them that they should not ask such questions, because there would certainly be stool pigeons in the cinema and they would learn who the candidate city-guerillas were. I don't know if my intervention had any result, but I don't remember anyone declaring that he supported the armed struggle.

The "Exemptions Committee" and the Conscription Office of Attica play “Find the Lady” with me

Just before Christmas 1987 I got a summons from the army to report back to the 401's Exemptions Committee. Accompanied by supporters, including my brother, I presented myself at the hospital and gave them the summons. They insisted that they knew nothing, that the summons had been sent to me by the Army and not by them, and that they had received nothing from the Army. Much later I realized that they were playing a game with me, so that I wouldn't be exempted. My brother, however, at that stage, while I was waiting at the hospital for the committee to receive me, went to the Conscription Office of Attica, in Roof, where I belonged, and asked if they had notified the hospital. From there they told him that, of course, they had sent the relevant document to the hospital officially. Because they refused to give him a copy, to present it to the hospital, in order to stop bothering

them, they gave him and he photocopied the page related to me in the protocol book of the Attica Conscription Office. The infantryman who gave it to him couldn't imagine that the stratocrats were playing a game and this would reveal them. Of course, even photocopying the page of the protocol book didn't make the 401 secretariat abide, so after two hours of pointless waiting, we left. Later, when the time came to refer this photocopy to the Conscription Office of Attica, which we asked to confirm its authenticity by consulting the protocol book, the answer we got was that the protocol book for the year 1987 had been lost!

Support for Vagelio Vogiatzi

In 1988, from a political point of view, we were involved in the movement in support of the four arrested "terrorists". Sophia had the idea to focus the movement on Vagelio Vogiatzi, who was also a woman and had a small child. So it could be the weak link in the case. For this purpose, a committee was formed, where, among others, the wife of Pisimisis, Litsa Galani, the lawyer Vaso Karaindrou and the mate of Giannis Felekis, Dora Komnou, participated. This committee managed, among other things, to make a broadcast on the then inter-municipal station of the western suberbs of Athens known as "Diavlos 10". Sophia, Karaindrou and Komnou, whom I mentioned above, had spoken in this broadcast in favor of the release of Vagelio Vogiatzi, who at that time was the only female political prisoner. At the same time, Sophia met the well-known singer Nena Venetsanou, who, to support Vogiatzi, also played at a concert in Eleftherias' Square of Korydallos, which at that time was not occupied by the sheds and chairs of the surrounding cafes and eateries, nor a construction site had been made to build a metro station there, as it is now. Finally, the wife of the then Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, Margarita Papandreou, joined the support movement to Vogiatzi herself, and after an event for Vagelio, to which invited a poster with a photo of her with her baby in her arms and in which spoke Papandreou too, Vogiatzi were released from prison.

Sophia had met Vagelio Vogiatzi in Korydallos Women's Prison, at the time when Sophia was in and Vagelio went in for a few days for some trivial reason, because, in order to see Sophia in person, she did not pay the sentence which was payable. As Giorgos Pitropakis had done with me, whom I knew before I got in prison. At least that's what Vogiatzi and Pitropakis told us at the time. I had never seen Vogiatzi, until after her release from prison where she was for the Prekas case. She came to our house and asked Sophia to collaborate on a series of radio broadcasts about prisons, which would be broadcast on "Diavlos 10". Sophia accepted and the broadcasts began. They both went to the first radio broadcast. In the second one, however, Vogiatzi did not appear, without first informing Sophia. Sophia took the whole burden of the broadcast on her shoulders and managed not to be surprised,

when suddenly the journalist, who was in charge of the broadcast, asked her what she thought about a prosecutor, Androulidakis, who had been shot by the "Revolutionary Organization 17 November" in the morning of that day and Sophia had not yet learned about it. Sophia only answered him that he was a prosecutor and thus avoided being heard on that live show that she was justifying the action, as I believe was the purpose of the journalist. This prosecutor, although only shot in the leg, eventually died, and his relatives sued the doctors who treated him. While for Vogiatzi it was written that she had escaped from a hospital in Germany, where she was under guard, and Germany wanted her. The fact is that the broadcasts stopped and from Vogiatzi we didn't hear any more.

The mockery of me by the military continues – The attempt to lock me up in the psychiatry ward of the 401 military hospital

The next step of the stratocrats against me was to have the Exemptions Committee meet in February 1988 without my knowledge and instead of exempting me from the military service, as it should have been according the law after what had happened, it decided to summon me in March. They didn't call me in March, but they wrote that they called me and I didn't go. They called me again in May, but when I went with my people (among whom was Theodoros Megaloikonomou, who had done so much for us when we were in prison, and had also come as a prosecution witness at the trial, which had been held for my beating by the guards) they pretended they didn't know anything, with the result that my brother ran to Roof again, brought a new document again, and again they refused to receive it. After a lot of fuss, they accepted it, and sent me to Tarasidis, a military psychiatrist known from the Lazopoulos case, and he requested that I be locked up in the 401 mental hospital, as they had done with Maragakis. I didn't go crazy enough to get locked up and have them do what I heard they were doing to others, and I asked them to send me this decision written in document. At the same time, I started an adventure with lawyers, who legally intervened in the case, sending an extrajudicial letter to 401 in the first instance. But I didn't achieve anything more than being called back to report, as if I were healthy and nothing had happened in the past, in Rethymno!

"Money do not bring happiness"! – I close myself in Dromokaiteio public psychiatric hospital

And as if all that wasn't enough, in May it was confirmed that my mother was suffering from gynecological cancer and had to be operated urgently. Nevertheless, it was not all black at that time, although I did not see things then as I see them now. I had succeeded and a part of a real estate off mine had been sold and I had enough money in the bank, for the first time in my life. So, I had already bought my first computer, an Amstrad 1512, and thus the door to a new, beautiful world had been opened before me. I have always been more or less a solitary person, because I did not like the treatment that my social environment reserved for me. I didn't like the social hypocrisy or being disrespected, as is common among Greeks. And the personal computer is the best gift for a lonely person. And it was even at the time when there was no internet in Greece. And besides the PC, having money so I could get out of the house and go to a tavern with Sophia was pretty important to cheer me up. Until I sold the property, I didn't have the option for "night outings". Unfortunately, despite my financial comfort, I could not escape the mental trauma caused by my mother's illness. Since then, from the age of 32, I was afflicted with a hypochondria that tormented me for almost the rest of my life. Only in the last few years did I overcome it, because impressive events happened in my life.

My mother had surgery and then radiation and beat the cancer. I was lucky enough to have a brother who was a graduate student in Medicine and took care of my mother in medical matters. Of course, he couldn't be dealing with my recruitment case at the same time. Luckily I had Sophia to deal with it, which served me incredibly well. And that's because I had the bright idea, instead of presenting myself in Rethymno, to lock myself up in the Dromokaiteio psychiatric hospital and on the day of the presentation, Sophia should go to the headquarters of the Guard to certify that I am being treated in a public hospital. As it happened. But, as I should have expected after all these illegalities against me by the stratocrats, at the Guards' headquarters they wrote on their old shoes what the law provided for and refused to receive the certificate, passing Sophia to the conscription office. The conscription office found the certificate useless and asked Sophia for a certificate that I was hospitalized for at least 20 days. Like a fool, I also listened to them and sat another 20 days in Dromokaiteio. However, Sophia was not only useful for this. She came to Dromokaiteio every day, all the days I stayed. And I stayed several days, because I wanted to secure reliable opinions that I was mentally ill, so that the Exemption Committee could meet without me, as they were obliged to do, and exempt me. If Sophia hadn't come every day, I would have been a victim of the

nurses, who, if not all of them, take their repressed feelings out on the defenseless inmates. In particular, at one point a head nurse was angry with me because I wasn't eating the awful, to my taste at least, mental hospital food, some legume soup. Even though I showed her a bag full of treats to let her know I wasn't going to starve to death, she insisted on characterizing my behavior as a relapse of my (non-existent) mental illness in order to take repressive measures against me. Fortunately, at that time, shortly after that incident, Sophia had come and "laid a hand" on her, and the doctor who had admitted me also happened to be on duty, and he knew that I did all this to avoid the army. The doctor took responsibility for my refusal to eat the hospital's awful soup and that was the only way I escaped the head nurse's nefarious plans. It is common for head nurses to be very mean women. Not all of them, of course, just as not all uniformed men are bad. I say this because, after many years, on a bus I was coming from Lefkada, a head nurse sitting behind me hit me when I called her bad woman because she was cursing me for not using my window curtain. I told her that if the sun bothered her, she should change seat. Some of the audience, some girls, even took her side and the bus driver stopped the bus saying that he would not continue unless I stopped protesting because that bad woman had hit me! The passengers began to complain that I was supposedly delaying them, so I had to "swallow" this "insult be deed," as it's called in legal jargon, in order for the bus to continue on its way.

About the situation I experienced in Dromokaiteio and later in Dafni, where I went, I had written then an article entitled "What I saw in mental hospitals", to be published in a far-left magazine that was published at the time, "Convoy". Our well-known Maroula had undertaken to promote it. However, I have the impression that she did not succeed, and the article was not published. Much later I uploaded it to the internet and this is how it was read. Since I don't think that the one who will read my autobiography is obliged to read this article of mine, I will refer to some things that I experienced and in fact, some of them, are not mentioned in the article.

Building 9 of Dromokaiteio, which has now been permanently closed, as well as the prison of Aegina

The Dromokaiteio building I had ended up in was building 9 I think, a hundred year old building that was a raised ground floor and had at least two wards. In my ward there were nine people, all poor (their money was kept by the administration of the psychiatric hospital and they were only given a little for cigarettes or for an orange juice). Some of them didn't even have a cigarette to smoke (at that time smoking was not prohibited in hospital wards). I remember someone, whose name I have unfortunately forgotten, who smoked from my own cigarettes (I was giving him when he was asking me). Another asked me for a cigarette and some change, every time he saw me in the courtyard. He couldn't imagine that I was an inmate too, because I dressed like an English tourist vacationing in the Bahamas or Bermuda. Specifically, I was wearing white shorts and a white T-shirt. After all, it was summer, i.e. holiday season. All the people in the ward were middle-aged. The ward only had some pre-war iron beds, divans to be exact. If it also had one or two nightstands, I am not sure. I, fortunately, had got a bed in a corner. But it was July and it was terribly hot, there were no fans or air conditioning, and a day later one tooth of mine started aching and I had had a terrible time. It was a tooth, which, before I was locked up in the psychiatric hospital, my dentist, Mitrovgenis, whom I knew since I had been me in prison where he had come and see me because he supported me politically, had begun to seal it for me. He had done a rough seal and left for vacation. My tooth hurt so much that it didn't stop hurting me even with painkillers. But after some days, I managed to contact my dentist and he suggested that I unseal it myself. That's the only way the pain stopped. The teeth of inmates in psychiatric hospitals were usually destroyed by the drugs, but I managed not to take my own drugs. My appearance at the time was forbidding enough for the nurses to check me if I took the pills. At most I would take some light sedative to be able to sleep at night. Because this was also extremely difficult, due to the fact that the night nurses left the corridor TV on all night and talked loudly. The doors of the wards were always left open, as was some dim light. If any inmate slept, he would sleep because he was forced to take a handful of pills every night. Everyone was given lots of pills. Many were, however, kept awake by the bustle of the nurses, and when at 6 o'clock in the morning they were falling asleep as I also did, the cleaners would come and throw us out of our beds and even out of the building to "clean up". What a torture... If anyone has experienced such situations, can to some extent feel the books written about the concentration camps of the last century, by some who survived. Psychiatry asylums have a lot in common with these camps. Even in the toilets. Because a basic need of the human being is to have access to a toilet so that, whenever necessary, he can defecate. In Dromokaiteio, the toilets had no doors, ɦ the result that every

inmate was forced to defecate exposed to the gaze of those who visited the toilets. I, staying 25, in total, days in Dromokaiteio, did not go to these toilets to defecate. Every time I had to get permission to go home after days of confinement in order to satisfy this basic need. Of course, there was no privacy in the bathrooms and they forced people to bathe naked, next to others. I never bathed in Dromokaiteio, even when, due to the heat, they were all forced to do so. My appearance protected me. Even when I got permits and left, the doormen, seeing my appearance, could not imagine that I was an inmate and therefore did not stop me to examine the permit document.

Now, as for the doctors, accustomed as they were to finding problems to those confined in a psychiatric hospital, they tried to do the same with me, even though they were informed of the reason for my confinement by the very director of the particular clinic I was. The doctor who admitted me, although he knew why I came in, showed up one day with a whole book full of questions to take my medical history. He even asked me about my parents' relationships. I tried to give ambiguous answers, so that it would not appear from my medical history that I was totally sane. The two doctors in the clinic who were responsible for me, when I once asked to leave, gave me an exit diagnosis, which said that my cure was not fullfiled and I needed to be hospitalized again, because I had a problem! I, however, while I was in there, was reading the excellent book "Behind the Asylum Walls". I finished it before I left the mental hospital and gave it as a present to my admitting doctor.

The joke is that, for this stay of mine in this mental asylum, I should also pay, as if I had been treated in a hospital. I never had insurance, so I had to pay all the money myself. Fortunately, I had sold the property and had money. My uncle Meltos was somehow right when he told me that I really must have a psychiatric problem to go and lock myself up in a psychiatric hospital just because I wanted to avoid the army.

After the second certificate of hospitalization, this time from Dromokaiteio, the Exemptions Committee should exempt me without my presence in person. Instead, they threw the certificate in the trash, just as they had thrown the first one that my brother brought to them from the 401 Military Hospital, when I had to report to Tripoli. They did the opposite, they accused me for insubordination, as they later told my lawyer. And they proceeded to invite me this time to Ioannina.

I fall ill with a persistent ailment that makes my hypochondria worse – I find a comrade even in distant Kos – With my mother in Rhodes 35 years later from her "honey moon" there

By the time I was called to Ioannina, I was ill with prostatitis, which, due to hypochondria, I was slow to treat and, due to pain, I only went to a doctor around the 10th of August, who gave me a massage treatment that lasted months and cost 100,000 drachmas at that time, a not inconsiderable amount. I will never forget that I was afraid of testicular cancer and while I had "escaped" with a prostatitis, before the doctor made this diagnosis, he diagnosed testicular cancer, which had already metastasized, in a 36-year-old man who had previously been waiting with me in the waiting room! That didn't stop me from going on a trip with my mom, my brother, and Sophia when my mom finished the radiation. We went for a week to Kos and from there we took the boat to Rhodes and Kalymnos. Luckily I had money at the time. If I hadn't, I wouldn't have turned to lawyers, nor would I have been hospitalized, nor would I have turned to an assistant professor about prostatitis, as I did, nor would we have gone to Kos, which was a "breath" for all of us at that time.

In Kos we stayed in a hotel outside the city overlooking the Turkish coast. And since we had money for taxis, the whole family often went to the city to see the sights, such as the ancient finds from the clinic of Hippocrates, the "father" of Medicine. There is even a tree in the city, which is supposed to survive from the time of Hippocrates.

From left to right my brother, our mother and I at Hippocrates' clinic. With such a face and the stratocrats were eager to serve them!

And, one day when Sophia and I were walking alone in the city, a military jeep suddenly stops near us and I hear: Filippa! Filippa! And a friend and comrade comes out, whom I knew from Athens and, at that time, was serving his term in Kos, which was his hometown and where his sister was a permanent non- commissioned officer in the army. It is assumed that Kos, as an island located very close to Turkey, according the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, which defines the relations between Greece and Turkey, should not have a Greek army and should also respect the rights of its Turkish minority. But the Greek army writes "on its old shoes" the international treaties whenever it can, just as it does the laws concerning conscription.

Anyway, I was very happy because my "grace" had reached Kos, i.e. I had an ideological comrade even in Kos and I was not upset that this comrade was a soldier, because he was gay and liked to see young people. In fact, he was telling me that he had some relationship, secret of course, with an officer. Also, he had brought with him a very handsome young man, whom he had been close to in Athens, and at that time this young man was working in a tourist restaurant in Kos. I had met this young man in Athens, at the house of my friend and comrade from Kos, a unique house, because I have never seen such a house in Greece. It was inside a park and was probably built to serve the municipal employees who looked after the park. Now, how my friend had managed and rented it, I did not ask, and I never found out. Impressive personality this friend and comrade. He had already started a career as a journalist before joining the army and continued after he was discharged. And he dealt with serious issues, such as the psychiatric hospital of Leros which later became known throughout the world for its brutality towards the inmates. In fact, when my friend had gone to the Leros psychiatric hospital to get interviews for a radio broadcast, he had also interviewed me by phone for that show. As a former inmate of a mental institution I had some things to say to him. It was my first time being interviewed for the radio. And this was done for a Kos radio station.

Sophia and I in front of the town hall of Kos

As I wrote above, one day we took the boat and went to Rhodes. For my mother, it was the second time she visited the island, just like the last time. The same for us. As I have written before, my mother spent her "honeymoon" there, as they call the first month after the wedding, when the newlyweds go somewhere alone. She had gone there in 1953 and by now we were in 1988, while my father had already been dead for 8 years and my mother had survived cancer. After such an event it was worth it to see again one of the two most beautiful cities in Greece. The other, Corfu, she never saw.

My mother, at the time we went to Rhodes together, had not only passed the "damned disease", as Sophia's uncle in Lefkada called it. She also had a problem with her knee, which hurt and was permanently bandaged. Despite all this, she came with us on walks in the old town of Rhodes, as well as in Kos. She didn't like it, because she was suffering, but she succumbed to our pressure. She was a victim of my notion that when one goes somewhere, one must get to know that somewhere as best one can, and that is not possible without walking around. On the other hand, I saw it as an achievement for her, after such an adventure with her health, to move around in the most beautiful parts of Greece. And the strange thing is that, when we went to Kos, Rhodes and Kalymnos, I had prostatitis and, before we went, I had pains. As long as the trip lasted I don't remember having any pain. They caught me again when I returned to Athens and continued the treatment! There was only one thing I didn't like about Rhodes, when we went for the second and last time: Its most important attraction, the castle of the knights, was closed to the public, because it was being prepared for a summit conference of the prime ministers of the European Union. Fortunately, Sophia and I had seen it from the inside in 1982, unlike the Florence Cathedral which I never saw, because whenever I went to Florence, with Sophia or by myself, it was closed. Perhaps someone is dreaming during his whole life of seeing a sight, and when he once succeeds in reaching it, he is prevented from seeing it!

From the left, my brother, our mother and I in Rhodes in 1988

Our last trip away from Kos was to Kalymnos. It was very hot and to see anything except the town, which is small, you needed to take a bus and the buses were not frequent. So until we got the boat back to Kos, we went from cafe to cafe. It goes without saying that it's one of those places I wouldn't be interested in seeing again.

I close myself in the public psychiatric hospital of Dafni, in the wing where Asimos was hospitalized. But I do not stay a single night in this hell

When we returned to Athens, while I was waiting to be exempted from conscription, since for so many years I had produced so many documents that according to the law I should have been exempted, I received a summons to report to do my military service in Ioannina. In fact, they wrote that I am also insubordinate! In order not to do them the favor of going to the wolf's den alone, and at the same time let them make me legally insubordinate, I arranged for the day of the presentation to be hospitalized again in a public hospital. At Dafni's mental hospital this time. I was not deterred by the threats of the responsible officer of the Military, Captain Vasilios Manos, who threatened my mother and my brother over the phone that he would lock me up in prison, nor from his abusive behavior towards Sophia, telling her me to leave the hospitals and come forward to serve them or he

would send the cops to lock me up in prison. He did not understand, like a military officer of limited intelligense, that for me to have accomplished so much when in prison, and also, in the matter of the army, them not having succeeded in making me illegal for so many years, meant that I was no easy opponent nor any new recruit who, just as he presents himself in the army, he is attacked by his elders and terrorized into abandoning whatever dignity he had until then.

I presented myself in Dafni on Saturday with the prospect of getting a paper on Monday, that I am hospitalized, and for Sophia to take it to the Guard. But Daphni, as I saw it, was not a relatively easy case, like Dromokaiteio. In building 4 where I was sent, in which Asimos had been hospitalized many months ago and shortly after being released he committed suicide at the age of 38, there was a ground floor for men and a first floor for women, if I remember correctly. On the ground floor there were two huge wards, with about fifty people each. There was a hall between them. The door leading to the courtyard was locked and someone needed to visit you in order they to let you out of the building. In the next room from mine, someone was tied to the bed naked and he was screaming all the time. During the visit from Sophia that I received right after I was admitted to the psychiatric hospital, an woman inmate of around 50 had come and sat next to us on the bench, and asked us for a cigarette. Before she smoked it she peed on the spot! Another inmate who appeared to be hospitalized for years and had asked me for a cigarette, when I was in the room made the bed for me, showing his gratitude. He told me that I should be careful at night, because someone might bring me the nightstand on the head! After all this, I asked the doctor who had admitted me to give me a license to leave until Monday, and since I had been closed of my own free will, she gave it to me.

On Monday I came back with the prospect of leaving the same day, since previously Sophia would have gone to the Guard headquarters to get the confirmation that I was hospitalized. But I had to be seen by the ward doctor first. When I entered building 4 to find him, he was locked in his office talking to the nurses. He was telling them to stop beating people, because this method of treatment has nothing to do with medicine. They insisted on continuing to beat the people, because otherwise they would "raise their hands" and let the inmates be sedated by the doctor, something they considered impossible. From the inmate, who had made my bed on Saturday, I learned that he was beaten by other inmates, because they thought that this way he and not they would secure my favor! After all this, and from what I had seen on Saturday as well, I understood that Dafni was a real hell and I did very well not intending to be hospitalized there, as I had been hospitalized in Dromokaiteio. It is no coincidence that Nikolas Asimos, after his hospitalization in Dafni, was not only not cured but committed suicide. Fortunately, at one point the doctor came out, a young man who seemed not yet alienated by the concentration camp regime that characterized the Daphni,

and "saw" me. So I was able to get the confirmation that I was hospitalized by Daphni's secretariat and Sophia ran with it to the Guard headquarters.

I entrust my military case to a lawyer – In vain the military psychiatrist finds me unfit – They set a trap for me at the Police Station of Vrilissia

At the Guard's Headquarters they would not get the certificate, even though they were obliged to, just as they hadn't got it the previous time. But I had taken care and hired a great lawyer, judging by his fees, Dimitris Filis, (his brother, after many years, became Minister of Education), who went with Sophia to the Guard's Headquarters and they were thus forced to receive the certificate that I was hospitalized. In fact, the person in charge made a new application for me to go through the Exemptions Committee, but not without a personal presence, as the law provided.

The lawyer's next step was to find out why I had been insubordinate, since I had always been formally lawful towards them and this was proved by all the documents, which I had made available to the lawyer. They told him that they had taken me out for insubordination, because I had not presented myself in 1987 in Tripoli. The relevant papers of the Athens Guard's Headquarters and of the 401military hospital, that we had submitted to them, they had "lost them" and the copies that the lawyer took to them, they had no intention of taking them into account. When he even showed them a photocopy of their protocol book, which they had mistakenly allowed my brother to take out, they still did not accept it and claimed that they had lost the protocol book! It is incredible the ease with which the military violates the laws, but it is also incredible that it is taken for granted by everyone that the military violates their military laws. And even with impunity. They tell you: "Where logic ends, the army begins" and they get rid of you for asking for "change".

The next step of the army against me was to send me a paper to report to the Exemptions Commission within five days, when normally they should give a period of one month. In fact, after these five days, a new "class" was being introduced to the army and if they didn't release me, they could demand that I be presented immediately. This was what they had in mind when they sent me the summons to report to 401, as it turned out, because, although this time the military psychiatrist Tarasides who examined me, found me unfit to serve (I5), the Exemption Committee, without agreeing to look none of the diagnoses I provided, not even listening to my lawyer, after two minutes of "examination" found me fit to serve suffering from "paranoid-type psychopathological manifestation in borderline personality". They sent me a paper to appear in two days in Haidari, at the "Transmissions". When soldiers with such a diagnosis are selected for the communication service of the army, how can the planes and helicopters not fall as they do that every now and then when they are they making a show of strength towards Turkey in the Aegean? Anyway, those who are killed when the planes and

helicopters fall, are not members of the Exemptions Committee.

Along with the summons to appear, they also asked the cops to arrest me (illegally) for insubordination. The cops who, even with their limited perception, could not understand that a man with a past like me does not "chew weed", tried to catch me by ambushing me. They brought to my mother's house, which I always declared as my place of residence, a summons for my father to report to the police station within 48 hours. My father had been dead for 8 years at the time but the cops thought that I was going to present myself to the police station and tell them so and they would arrest me, telling me that they wanted me and that they had put by mistake my father's name on the summons. This was proven when, instead of me, my mother went and she was told: "Sorry, mistake, we didn't want Kostas but Filippos Kyritsis." If I had gone they would have "accidentally" arrested me for insubordination, because there was no arrest warrant giving them that right. I, at that time, not only did not live at the addresses they had in their hands, but even my appearance had changed so that even my acquaintances on the street did not recognize me. And from the house in which I was hiding, I rarely came out. I had no intention of letting them get me easily. They were so sure of themselves that they asked me to report to the army on the 17th of November to be humiliated, since they knew that not only I but also the majority of the people of this country would never forgive the army for the crime they committed this date in 1973 with the Polytechnic University (N.T.U.A.) massacre.

I find alone my way to block the way of the Conscription Office – I loose my lawyer in order not to betray Katerina Iatropoulou – My application to be exempted from conscription is rejected and I appeal to the Council of the State

But they made a mess of it and they made it for good, very good. Filippas Kyritsis was never an easy opponent: In particular, on the eve of the enlistment day, I found that there was a law that exempted me from military duty, because in the past I had been sentenced to prison (to a sentence of more than 5 years in prison). I informed my lawyer about this law and he, on the day I had to enlist, sent an appeal to the conscription office against my enlistment summons, because according to the military law I was not liable for military service. I also notified this law to my old lawyer Katerina Iatropoulou, who not only submitted on the day of enlistment (November 17th) a request to exempt me from military duty based on the law I mentioned earlier, but also, the next day, submitted a document from the Supreme Court certifying that my conviction was irrevocable. In addition, to break the nerves of the bullies, like the captain Manos, she also filed the book "The case of Filippas and Sophia Kyritsis" and told them that she had produced it!

The police of Vrilissia, where my mother lived at the time, not being able to terrify me, had a fight with my mother and took a statement from her about my alleged insubordination. Also, after a couple of days, they also took from my brother, who brought them all the relevant papers proving that there was no insubordination.

Also the assistant of Iatropoulou, also a lawyer, submitted the same papers to 4th investigator of the Athens Military Court. From all this, as it turned out later, they realized that the trap did not catch me and "the bird flew" that they were sure they would catch. The only unpleasant thing in the whole development of the case, at that time, was that the lawyer, Filis, when he learned that Iatropoulou was also running for my case, demanded that I remove her from the case, otherwise he would resign. I, however, could not betray my friendship and collaboration with Iatropoulou, whom I had known since 1977 and had done so much for us. I have never betrayed anyone in my life. So Filis left the case and, in addition to a good lawyer, I also lost the advances of his fee that I had given him until then. And it was a lot of money...

After a few months, I received a reply from the Ministry of National Defense, that the request to be exempted from conscription was rejected, because I had been released from prison with a pardon from the President of the Republic, which was accompanied by the removal of the consequences of the conviction. They decided i.e. that, due to a pardon with removal of the consequences of the conviction, formally I had never been convicted! This, of course, is not surprising at all, because the Supreme Court and the Council of State, which are the highest courts in Greece, have proven in the past that they are masters of juggling, without the judges caring that they are being debased. Even the seven-year dictatorship of 1967-1974, Areios Pagos characterized it as an instant (sic) offense and thus those who cooperated with the dictators went unpunished. Would it go against an entire Ministry of National Defense by characterizing a nine-year sentence, with three years and nine months in prison, existent? I, of course, having nothing else to do, applied to the Council of the State to cancel the above decision of the Ministry of National Defense and at the same time requested to suspend the conscription until the decision is issued. The then rapporteur of my case in the Council rejected the suspension. However, after a few months, he called my new lawyer, Dimitris Oikonomou, and told him I to submit a new application and that, if I did, he would accept it! As he eventually did. Fortunately, until the application for suspension was accepted, I did not receive another call to report. They would think that they are wasting their time, since I didn't go to Tripoli when they called me, I didn't go to Rethymno, I didn't go to Ioannina, I didn't even go to Haidari which is Athens! If I were invited to Honolulu, just out of curiosity to see a place so beautiful and so far away that I can never find money to go, if they would give me the tickets, I would go. But such places keep them for their children who send them, supposedly, to be trained by NATO, at the expense of the Ministry of National Defense, i.e. the taxpayers...

During all this time that I was fighting my battles against the army, I also had Sophia's brother scolding me every now and then a little, because I was not building the house that his mother had left in Lefkada as a not finished building. With an agreement between him and Sophia, he had taken the ground floor of the two-story building, to make it a shop and make money, and Sophia had taken the first floor, to make it a home. He had gone ahead with the shop and he demanded that I go ahead with the house too, so as not to spoil his shop's facade. This demand of his was nothing in front of what was to follow, but I will speak about it later. For now, I limit myself to the fact that, in order not to bother us any more, we decided to go to Lefkada and build the house which, seven years after the death of Sophia's mother, was still an unfinished building. Luckily, I still had money from the plot I had sold.

THE HOUSE IN LEFKADA AND THE BIRTH OF OUR DAUGHTER

The adventures of building a house when you are at the "mercy" of the builders

So, in the spring of 1989 I found myself in Lefkada. I would not go there if the Conscription Office gave me a certificate that I had no military obligation until the trial in the Council of the State. But when I got the necessary papers from the Council and took them to the Conscription Office, they refused to give me a certificate on the pretext that they did not know when the Council would meet. So, not being able to get a passport, without a certificate from the army, I left for Lefkada.

In our attempt to build a house in Lefkada, I understood why they say that "you don't know anything if you haven't built a house and married a daughter". However, after many things, the story of which will follow below, we built the house. But daughter, I haven't get married yet, so I don't know anything! Anyway, we went through a lot because of this house. For me, having a house in Lefkada was a dream. But like all dreams, when they come true, the end result makes you wonder if you were right to have such a dream. And from my "many years of experience" I know that the problems I faced are faced by almost everyone, those who decide to build a house and not to buy. First and foremost, from the craftsmen. Before the Albanians came to Greece, during the 1990s, all kinds of craftsmen who did construction work were so well paid and so demanding, that even doctors and lawyers, who traditionally claim a better position than the average citizen in society, were more accessible and less demanding than them. It is an extremely unpleasant experience dealing with craftsmen, especially when you have no technical knowledge, and because they are scarce, you are unable to fire them when they screw up and you don't know how to tell them how to do their work right. That's how you "go to the unknown with hope as boat".

When we went to Lefkada, to build the house, we stayed in a hotel and paid a lot of money. We couldn't let the days go by without doing anything. On the other hand, there were neither technical offices to recommend craftsmen, nor printed guides with such information. And the political sub-engineer who had made the plans and had also built the new town hall of Lefkada so badly that after a few years it was so damaged by the earthquakes that they ended up demolishing it, she said she didn't know anyone to recommend us. According to the law, in the construction of a new building, the civil engineer is in charge and supervises the craftsmen. Nevertheless, such laws for urban planning offices are fine print and their employees do not observe them, as the law obliges them to do. In fact, this sub-engineer of ours had made some plans that would make the apartment with two rooms. Fortunately, Sophia had learned something about drawing when she was young, and changed the sub-engineer's plan. The sub-engineer "kicked" but finally gave in and for the

renewal of the building permit, which Sophia's mother had issued in the past, she sent a new plan, as Sophia wanted.

I, apart from the fact that, as long as I couldn't find craftsmen, I was paying for a hotel, I was also in a hurry to bring my mother on vacation in Lefkada. I didn't know if she had escaped cancer for good and that's why, if she were to get sick again, I would have liked she to have known before the house we were going to build in Lefkada. Anyway, no matter how much I was in a hurry, I couldn't find any craftsmen even among Sophia's relatives in Lefkada, who knew quite a few, because they were also building their own houses at that time. Finally, a builder was found, known to Sophia's brother's father-in-law, from a remote mountain village of Lefkada, Platystoma. He, as a builder, was so sought-after that he had already built a house with the money he earned, housed his wife and two small children there, and had other rooms in this house to rent to tourists. This builder, because he only gave us an elevator for the building materials for one day (he was building other houses at the same time and that's why he took it from one to the other), forced us and our Lefkada relatives to bring the building materials up to the first floor. Otherwise, he wouldn't come to work. And when, after some days, he had finished building, that is, had laid the bricks and mortar, besides his wages and his social security stamps, he wanted me to sign for him that he was injured in my building, so that he might get compensation, without having been injured. I was more afraid of the consequences of such a thing than he was, so I did not sign.

When the builder finished, we left the hotel and started living in the building. It was about time because the hotelier, although we had been his customers for years, since we had stayed again in 1987, when we had gone to Lefkada, told us one day that he had given our room to others and had moved our things (without asking us) in another room (worse)! The next day we left and went to our own house. And since then, whenever we go to Lefkada, we stay in our own house.

The next handyman to enter the house was the carpenter who also happened to be Sophia's brother's boss, so we trusted him. He had come from Athens to Lefkada, to take the measurements, took them, many of them wrong, returned to Athens, made doors and windows and then brought them ready from Athens. I, trusting Sophia's brother, thought that this craftsman would treat us better than others. And yet, he treated us worse. He made us some incredibly thin balcony doors, with floor-to-ceiling glass, to save on wood. And as if this were not enough, on the balcony doors and windows he used the worst wood for such work, the Swedish, which is very soft and makes for furniture and not for frames, doors and windows in an island like Lefkada which is famous for its rains. I have seen and suffered, all these years since, to prevent these balcony doors from rotting and be forced to throw them away. And as if all that he did to us wasn't enough, in the end he asked us for more money than we had agreed and, in order to blackmail us to get them, he had not

brought a window from Athens. He sent it, only when he had received some more money than what we had agreed upon.

The next craftsman who entered the house with his crew was the plasterer. He was also from a village, from Vonitsa, nicknamed Dais (bully). Luckily he wasn't a bully. But he was inconsistent. In addition to ours, he was plastering other houses in Lefkada at the same time, with the result that he was not coming to work when he was telling us he would. From one point on, I took the bicycle of one of Sophia's cousins and looked for him in all the buildings of the city. Till then, the city of Lefkada was small in area. When I was finding him perched on some scaffolding, I would not "leave him alone" until he came to ours. After all, he hadn't started working right away. He had started work a week later since we made the deal. At least he had some sense of humor. And I, to cheer him and his workers up, brought them beers while they were working. Some Bulgarian beers I had never seen before and haven't seen since. And in addition to such treats, to get my work done I paid extra, with twice the daily construction wage of the time, to one of his workers just to plaster a loft for me.

An electrician who is sloppy at his job but with much Lefkadian humor

Alongside the plasterer and the carpenter, an electrician from Lefkada had also worked. He was able to do mischief by presenting it so cleverly as necessary, that he knew how to make fools of people. He made me in his way agree to hang two lamps instead of one in the living room, and to hang the lamp in one room not in the middle but near the wall. He also ran the cables through the walls without putting pipes and when I asked him what I would do, in case something happened to them, he told me to call him and "he will come" (in Lefkaditika) even if he is dead in the cemetery. He didn't know much, but he pretended to know, and when he found himself in the dark, he brought a qualified electrician with him, who got him out of trouble. You will tell me: How did he manage to seduce people? He had a weapon at his disposal, a terrible weapon: Lefkadian humor. The Lefkadian humor was one of the most important cultural characteristics of the city of Lefkada, before the Lefkadians were culturally integrated into the rest of Greece, as happened in the next two decades. In the 80s, even in the 90s, there were old Lefkadians alive who were distinguished for this humor, as well as for other things, such as the songs they sang, at the time when in the villages people listened to the pop songs known as “skyladika” as in the cities. When these old Lefkadians died, every cultural characteristic of Lefkada died with them, with the result that today Lefkada is like any tourist island, if we exclude the town planning and architecture of the old town, which, like the old town of Corfu, was saved from earthquakes of 1953 that leveled all the old towns of the Ionian Islands. However, the Lefkada electrician is still alive, even though he is old. I, too, not only didn't hold a grudge against him for what he did to me, but I also became

his friend and from then on, we drank many beers together. Especially at the time he boasted that he never drank water but only beer. So, I had the opportunity to enjoy Lefkadian humor from one of its best exponents. Too bad I didn't record everything he said. Today they would have museum value.

With comrades in an unfinished house without a toilet and without railings on the balconies – A toilet with an uncertain future! – Hosting relatives in the unfinished house

I did well to hurry at the time to get the house going. My mother may not have died then, but before we even had a toilet, a couple of comrades came to house them. And in fact the woman was pregnant with her first child and in advanced pregnancy. Which made her in particular need, due to frequent urination, of a toilet. They haven't come back since. As is often the case, people show up not when you want them to but when they want.

We got a toilet after a plumber came and a tiler had previously come. The tiler came to install tiles in the toilet, as was used at that time. The plumber who came was a relative, specifically the uncle of Sophia's brother's wife. If we had waited for someone else who had been introduced to us by Sophia's uncle, we would have waited even longer. Plumbers were so hard to find in Lefkada at that time. And he would do whatever he wanted. For example, in Sophia's uncle's apartment building, on the ground floor, he hung a drain pipe from the ceiling! But also, the relative of Sophia's brother who came, he came once and did not come again. The next time he was to come, he sent a fat and boorish assistant, who set up the sanitary ware, carelessly. Nameley, he misplaced the toilet bowl and the top-mounted cistern tilted and rested against the wall! He put the toilet bowl wrong, he told us, so that someone could sit better! And he leaned the cistern against the wall, so that no one would touch it and leave its place! He thought everyone was fat and unkempt like him, it seems. And after the electrician came for his electrics (he even installed a bell with a string above the bathtub, as was the old fashion, and a telephone socket) and then the tiler and finished the toilet, Sophia's brother came shouting and threatening to tear down my toilet because, supposedly, it was preventing him from building on the upper floor. All I told him was that this toilet had already cost me 1,000,000 drachmas and the objection should have been raised before the toilet was built. Of course, neither the toilet obstructed him nor did he build on the upper floor. Since then, 29 whole years have passed and he neither found money to build nor is he going to find it.

After the toilet was built and before railings were put in the balconies, floors in the rooms and glass in the balcony doors, my mother came with her brother and his wife. My purpose had been accomplished. From then on, little by little, and after selling other properties, I managed to finish the interior of the house after 4 years and the

staircase after 21 years. The delay in putting railings on the stairs almost cost us dearly, as we will see below.

The miserable occupation of the Polytechnic University (N.T.U.A.) in January 1990

The event that comes to my mind after this summer is the occupation of the Polytechnic University, at the end of January 1990. This occupation took place as a protest against the acquittal of the police officer Melistas who on November 17, 1985 had killed in Exarchia, on the street Stournari, the fifteen-year-old Michalis Kaltezas. It lasted 18 days and was the longest occupation of the National Technical University of Athens, as far as I know. We were not among those who did the occupation, but we often went to support the occupiers with our presence. We usually found some acquaintances there, such as Vassilis Karaplis, and we discussed the developments. We were particularly impressed by the scale of the disasters. In particular, I remember that a professor's office, which was full of bookshelves, had been destroyed to such an extent that nothing was left standing and the floor was covered with a pile of broken things and discarded documents and books. It is as if Alaric's Vandals had passed through there, the ones that had sacked and destroyed Rome in 410 AD. The only thing left working was the professor's phone, which had been grabbed by a short guy with a beam on his shoulder who was talking non-stop. We were also impressed by his "Vlach" pronunciation, i.e. his provincial accent, which at that time was still heard in Thessaly. During the 18 days that the occupation lasted, the buildings of the Polytechnic University in Patision suffered great damage for no reason. Even the statues that decorated the corridors were broken. And yes, it wasn't a bad idea as a protest against Melistas' acquittal, but it didn't have any goals related to the future either. It did not require e.g. the annulment of Melistas' trial and its retrial. Melistas was walking around free, having served only two and a half years in prison between his arrest and his acquittal by the Court of Appeal, and the National Technical University of Athens, the most important intellectual institution of the country, was becoming a mess. Apart from Melistas who got away with it clean, those who undertook the assessment and restoration of the damages came out as winners, because in these cases the costs of the damages are overestimated by the authorities and part of the public money intended for the restoration of the damages goes to the authorities, while the contracting companies that undertake the project issue inflated invoices. The State pays these tariffs, but not all the money goes to the companies. Much of this ends up in the hands of those responsible for restoring the damages, and the money that the companies get is excessive for the work they do, because from the beginning the cost of the damages, as estimated by the authorities, is greater than the final cost for their rehabilitation. Maybe that's why those responsible for the maintenance of public

educational institutions do nothing to prevent the disasters that happen to them, every now and then.

A failed attempt to support a protester who was serving 11 years sentence for a pistol he took from an undercover cop

Anyway, during the days when the Polytechnic University(N.T.U.A.) was occupied, in the prison there was someone called Deligiannis sentenced to 11 years in prison, who, together with others, had taken four pistols from security police officers who had mingled as demonstrators with the demonstrators, on the march for the first anniversary from the murder of the fifteen-year-old Kaltezas. The demonstration, where the pistols were removed, was on November 17, 1986, i.e. it was the demonstration that takes place every year on the anniversary of the Polytechnic University massacre of 1973. The anti-authoritarian newspaper "Dokimi", which was published after the demonstration in which pistols were taken away, he applauded those who took them away. But when, some days after the publication of the newspaper, Deligiannis was caught by the police with one of these pistols on him, no one stood by him as a political prisoner and he was in prison with an 11-year sentence. Because it was the longest sentence served by any political prisoner from the anarchist milieu at the time and nothing was done for him, shortly before the end of the occupation of the Polytechnic (N.T.U.A.), finding a comrade who "untied and tied" among the squatters, the "group leader" in the discussion group above Barbagiannis' tavern, me and Sophia thought of making a leaflet with Deligiannis' photo and his case, using the photocopiers that the Polytechnic had and which the squatters used every day to make leaflets. So, we typed the leaflet, put in the photo and the next day we took it to the Polytechnic University, to the comrade who "untied and tied". And as we were waiting for it to be photocopied, the comrade, when he went to photocopy it, was informed that all the photocopiers were broken! Another comrade we knew from Byron's group, which published the magazine Antithesis, offered to take us to a place where there would surely be a photocopier in operation. So he took us to the top floor of the most beautiful building in the complex, which is the Architecture faculty building. He opened a door for us that led to a large round room, the main room of the storey. When we saw gathered there well-known representatives of the "Union of Anarchists of Greece", which continued to publish the newspaper "Dokimi" which, when the pistols had been seized, was triumphant, but then left Deligiannis completely uncovered, we understood that we would be knocking "on deaf ears" and so we turned around and left. However, we were never able to understand how the Polytechnic University's photocopiers worked non-stop for about two weeks and when Sophia and I went to make an announcement about Deligiannis, they broke down. After this disappointment we got, we never went back to the occupied Polytechnic University and after a couple of days, after a demonstration with a central banner

"We are the thorn in the Greek society", the squatters left and the occupation ended ingloriously.

The ingrlorious end of the infamous psychiatrist of the Prisoners' Psychiatric Hospital of Korydallos

After this inglorious end to the occupation of the Polytechnic University, we found ourselves again in Lefkada, where we heard the news of the execution of the prison psychiatrist of Korydallos, Marios Maratos, in February 1990, by the revolutionary organization "Revolutionary Solidarity". I have spoken about him many times so far. On the day he was killed, we were at Sophia's uncle's house, where we were eating together with her uncle and his wife. I heard it from a phone call from my mother. My mom knew about him from us, so she called us to tell us to be happy. The impunity that the state had ensured him for his services, which also led to the lawsuit that Sophia had brought against him being thrown to the wastebasket ("being filed away" is the legal terminology), did not protect him from the bullets of the revolutionary movement. After his death and the publication of the proclamation of the organization that executed him, some wanted to present his execution as a blind blow, but soon complaints about his "work" came to light. As expected, the director of Korydallos' prison, Nikitas Polias, who I had known as the director of the prisoners' hospital in Korydallos, came to his defense and said that no one had anything against him, apart from one female prisoner in 1980. He would have considered of the lawsuit, which Sophia had submitted to him after the suppression of the rebellion of the women's prisons, it seems.

Waiting to have a child after 12 years of marriage

Sophia was pregnant at the time Maratos was killed. She was already 31 years old and, seeing, when we were building the house, how her 4-year-younger cousin in Lefkada was doing with 4 children, one of whom was an infant, she overcame her reluctance to have a child that characterized her in previous years . On the other hand, since it existed the house in Lefkada, it was impossible that this child would live on the street in the future. And for my part, who also did not want a child because I knew that he would suffer badly in such an inhumane society as the Greek one, I considered it my duty to my mate to contribute to the completion of the destiny imposed on her by nature. Destiny that is felt every month in women, who are of reproductive age, with the menstruation. I honestly believe that it is not good for a woman not to have a child, just as it is not good for a man not to make love, but that does not mean that it is not bad for a woman not to make love. Also, in order not to give the wrong impression that I did not see the birth of a child with some selfishness, I thought that it is bad to be in your last days and not have anyone by your side. I had seen in the hospitals people who were at their last and did not have

their children next to them and I had suffered something like a mental trauma.

Sophia had a good pregnancy, in the sense that she did not need to take special measures and was not at all cumbersome due to a large belly. And most importantly: By pure luck we found the best gynecologist that could be found for the delivery. In particular, when it had been established that my mother had gynecological cancer, in order to find a reliable doctor to operate on her, I had resorted to Giorgos Garmpis, the editor of "Eleftheros Tipos". He referred me to Alexis Gyftodimos-Karagiorgis, whose father was the famous communist, director of "Rizospastis" during the civil war, Kostas Karagiorgis. Kostas Karagiorgis, after the end of the war, fled to the countries that had a communist regime but fell out of favor with the leadership of the Greek Communist Party (K.K.E.) (of Zachariadis) and ended up in Bulgarian prisons, where he died. This was a lesson for his son Alexis and he did not engage in politics, as a result of which science "won" him. This Alexis had not, after all, operated on my mother. To my brother who had approached him, he had suggested that we take our mother to a public hospital, because he practiced medicine in a private one that did not have as many means to deal with difficult situations as a public one. But he was the obstetrician to Sophia.

On the eve of the day Sophia ended up in the maternity ward, we had climbed the Strefi hill. It was very hot and we did not expect Sophia to give birth, because she had just entered the ninth month of pregnancy. In fact, we had done an ultrasound and the radiologist had estimated the fetus at two kilograms, which is a very small weight for a fetus that is about to come out of its mother's womb. And the next day in the evening, when we were planning to go to the "witches' party" organized by the feminists in Strefis, on the occasion of Friday the 13th, which in Europe is considered auspicious, it was time for Sophia to give birth and by the car of a cousin of her we ended up at the private maternity hospital. We were quite anxious, because we were afraid that the child, if it was born only two kilos, would have a serious problem. Until our gynecologist came, she was put alone in a small room to lie down and wait. When I tried to go to her, another gynecologist blocked my way and showing me that he intended to beat me if I attempted it, prevented me from going near Sophia. I didn't feel like messing around with this scum, because I could see that Sophia was in the hands of this bunch of doctors and nurses and they could hurt her. Until that day I didn't know that there are doctors who play it dudes and bullies. I had such a good idea about the doctors, despite the fact that so many of them have been distinguished for heaps of crimes and I also had the experience of Dr. Rekleitis of the prisons of Aegina.

A newborn who disproved a radiologist and made the obstetrician prove his abilities

Anyway, shortly before 12 at night our gynecologist came and together with him and a nurse I waited, next to Sophia, for Sophia to enter the operating room. The pains caught her shortly after the doctor's arrival and he, in addition to giving instructions to Sophia, also monitored with a machine what the fetus was doing. When he saw that the fetus had wrapped the umbilical cord around its neck, the doctor, in order to prevent the interruption of blood circulation to its brain, put Sophia in the operating room. He told me that I could also be present, if I wanted, at the birth, but I did not enter the operating room, because I did not want to be present at the moment when the life and death of my child is decided. Later Sophia blamed me for it. While Sophia was in the surgery, I waited in the hospital lobby, where her cousin, who a few hours ago had brought her to the hospital with his car, came and found me. We didn't have to wait long. A little after twelve, a nurse appeared with a rolling cot, in which was a crying baby. He called me to come closer and, removing the blanket covering the baby, showed me its gender and told me it was a girl and wished to live. However, my attention was drawn to the peg they had put in the baby's navel after cutting the umbilical cord. After all, I knew the gender of the baby from the previous ultrasounds. I did not fail, however, to give the nurse a good tip "for the good news she brought me," as I characteristically told her. The day Sophia was "liberated" so to speak, and I say this because they wish pregnant women "good freedom", France was celebrating its liberation from the "old regime" of feudalism, with its revolution of 1789. It was July 14, the day when the people of Paris occupied the Bastille fortress which was used as a prison for political prisoners. Because of this fact the 14th of July is the day of the national holiday of France. Sophia was released from prison on July 24th, the anniversary of the liberation of Greece from the 1967-1974 military dictatorship, and gave birth to our daughter on July 14th, the anniversary of the liberation of France from feudalism.

A demanding infant that made me literally ache!

The period after the birth of my daughter, me and Sophia's life was centered on her, due to the fact that Sophia was nursing the baby and the baby was very restless and very demanding. For months the baby asked to nurse every three hours and if she didn't nurse she would disturb the world with her cries. Also, after breastfeeding, she did not want to be in the crib again but to remain in her mother's or even her father's arms. We had to put her to sleep in our arms before we put her in the crib, and if she woke up again when we put her in the crib, we had to rock the crib somehow. And since our daughter's bed wasn't a crib, we had to rock her mattress at least until the baby fell asleep. If we put her to sleep in a stroller, we had to rock the stroller or take her for walks around the house. Even when the baby grew up and started learning to talk, she wanted special care to sleep. From me who was lulling her to sleep on my lap walking around the room and singing songs to her, until she fell asleep on my lap, she would ask me to sing her a certain song from my repertoire. She used to tell me e.g. "bell" to sing to her the Sacellarios' song "Dring dring the bell, that rings the evening," or "Donna" for the Jewish folk song "Donna, Donna, Donna" that Joan Baez also sang. And since my daughter was no longer as light as when she was born, and had more than doubled her weight, this "weight lifting" after a few months led to pain in my lower back and various bones. But the hypochondria I had acquired since my mother was seriously ill and had an operation, did not allow me to go to a doctor. I was afraid that it would turn out that I have cancer and I was not in a position to suffer such a thing. So, I was in pain and I didn't know what to do, apart from climbing every morning to the top of Lycabettus, to cheer myself up. Otherwise, I had no mental strength for anything else, except of course to deal, necessarily, with my daughter, since there was no one else to help her mother.

A bomb goes off in our neighborhood, seriously injuring a comrade and leads two other comrades and a female comrade to prison

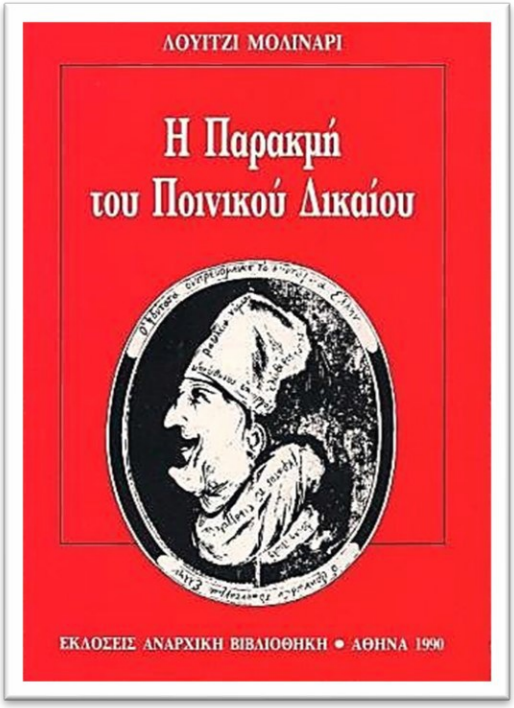
It was during this period, before my daughter began to speak and order the songs she wanted me to sing to her, that one night in November 1990, when it rained steadily, in a ground floor warehouse in our neighborhood, a bomb went off in the hands of a comrade, Kyriakos Mazokopos, whom I knew since we used to go to the discussions at the house of "Spyridoula", where I first met Sophia, in 1976. Although very seriously injured in the hand and face, Mazokopos managed, with the threat of a pistol, a taxi driver to take him to a hospital. There they managed to keep him alive, but he lost an arm and an eye. And in the following days the police arrested Giannis Bouketsidis, Rozina Bregner (whom Sophia knew from prison, when she was in prison for the Zirinis case) and Spyros Kogiannis and accused

them of being, together with Mazokopos, a terrorist organization, which owned the warehouse where the bomb exploded and later was found full of weapons. In fact, according to the police, this organization had previously killed the psychiatrist Marios Maratos! It is understood that those arrested denied the charges except for Mazokopos, who did not deny having anything to do with the warehouse but denied knowing about the weapons (they were well hidden inside the warehouse). Although a support movement for the other three began to form from the outset, it was difficult for Mazokopos to argue that he was irrelevant after all this. Sophia, however, in an interview she was asked to give to the newspaper "48 hours" published by Spyros Karatzaferis, spoke in favor of Mazokopos, denouncing the fact that they were presenting a seriously injured man as a criminal, without having at their disposal information about his alleged crimes. She spoke, of course, about the other three, denouncing the media's rush to portray them as terrorists.

"The Anarchist" and the first translation I managed to publish in my life

I, politically, at that time limited myself to typing some articles for the newspaper "The Anarchist", which was brought to me by a comrade who participated in this newspaper, Alekos Papadias. I had met him in the office of Vassilis Karaplis and spent a lot of time with him, not only because we agreed ideologically but also because he had also bought a computer and he gave me programs. The articles he brought me for typing, he had taken to be typed by him, but since it was a lot of work, I had offered to help him as well, since they were published in a small newspaper, with which I had previously worked. But I wasn't just typing the articles for “The Anarchist”. I was typing directly into the computer and the translation of an Italian book, The Decline of Criminal Law (Il tramonto del diritto penale) by an early 20th century Italian anarchist lawyer, Luigi Molinari. Ever since I got out of prison, I always had it in my mind to do something for the prisoners. That is why I had translated from English the book "The Struggle to be Human". But I could not find a publisher nor had money to print it, so I thought of translating the Italian book I mentioned above, which, being small, I hoped I would be able to print. Also, by translating from Italian, I kept in touch with this beautiful language that I had learned during our stay in Perugia in 1985-1986. And, indeed, I managed to print it, since I had previously taken the diskette with the book to the workshop of my old time comrade Nikos Balis, to do the photosynthesis that precedes the lithography. For the cover Nikos had sent me to a workshop in Zoodochou Pigis street. There I found Maria Petroulaki working there, whom I had met during the hunger strike for Christos Roussos. Maria made me the model of the book cover without accepting any money for her work and since then I have put her in my heart, as they say.

Finally, I was late getting the printed material from the photosynthetic machine, because Balis had a family adventure and his work got behind. In particular, his pregnant wife, Yola, gave birth to premature twins and they were at risk of suffering irreparable damage. Balis suffered a lot to avoid such a thing. How could I guess then that, 16 years later, and after their father would have died prematurely of a heart attack, these twins would be my daughter's classmates in the 5th Lyceum of Athens, the Lyceum of Exarchia!



The book cover, edited by Maria. The illustrated figure comes from the newspapers of the 19th century and, even if you turn it upside down, it looks the same, just the emotions and the hat change. He is the Greek who dreams of a constitution but ends up in a state of prosecutors.

Thus, for the first time in my life, at the age of 34, I managed to publish a book, I who already dreamed from 1977 to become a publisher of anarchist books and books that would make known in Greece the movements of Europe and America of the decades 60's and 70's. Already in 1977 I had translated the pamphlet "Anarchism, the relative of feminism", which was published, together with other such texts, by others later. Now that I'm in the sunset of my life and I've seen others

comrades having realized my own dream and being already since a long time dead, having previously suffered in hospitals, I have come to the conclusion that we should not be saddened by the fact that things do not turn out the way we want them to, as long as we are not encountering real misfortunes or, even more, calamities. This does not mean that we should not dream and pursue our dreams' realization, because more and more we will achieve something from what we dream of, as I managed to publish the "Decline". And previously, because of my dream to live abroad, I had already lived 10 months in Perugia, where I also learned Italian.

The pains in my waist and my back, my comrade Giannis Scandalis and the beginning of my involvement in martial arts

The pains in my waist, in my back and in other parts of my body continued and I kept not going to the doctor, until one day my friend and comrade in the prison struggles, John Scandalis showed up and as a solution to my problem he suggested that we start Karate classes, at the gym of a Japanese, who also gave classes to students of the Polytechnic University. Indeed, we started the lessons and after three months my pains were all gone! And I, of course, having thus met and loved martial arts, I did not stop Karate but continued in the following years. Giannis continued too, but from a point on he came more and more sparsely. And while in the first months we would leave the school together and drink a few beers, from one point on he would leave as soon as the lesson was over, without telling me where he was going. Much later I learned that he was going to Dafni, where Katerina Gogou, after me, ended to be treated every now and then. She had lost contact with me, but with Scandalis she had maintained very good relations, to the extent that the last time I saw her was in the apartment where Scandalis was staying, one afternoon, after we had finished the Karate lesson. In the Karate class, I saw my old friend, Savvas from Crete, for the last time. He had come with members of his collective, the "New Acropolis", to do a trial Karate lesson. I learned that he also had a daughter and that he worked for the Municipality of Athens. Much later,

after a book fair, where he had picked up my book "Το τρελόχαρτο" (Insanity certificate), in which I described my adventures in the army, he had asked me to meet for a weekend. I had told him that I would be away from Athens that weekend and since then he never called me again and we lost touch.

THE "SECOND" COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF FOREIGN WORKERS AND MINORITIES AND THE "GROUP FOR PRISONS"

A group of anarchists realizes that the movement must focus on the new reality of immigration and the old reality of oppression of national minorities

At the beginning of 1991, through Dimitris Troaditis from Byron's group, whom I also used to see in Karapli's office, I met a member of the "Committee for the Rights of Foreign Workers and Minorities" in a small cafe near Agioi Theodoroi, which was established in 1987 but dissolved after two or three years. This committee was the only collective that had until then raised the issue of defending immigrants in Greece, having produced a brochure and given an interview on Swedish television about the living conditions of immigrants in Greece. In 1987, there were not many immigrants in Greece, but they were from the most wronged sections of the population of Greece, as were the Gypsies and the world of the "fringe". And that's why I really appreciated this collective when I got their brochure. So, when Dimitris introduced me to a member of the committee, Kostas Apostolidis, I was excited and suggested to Kostas that we reconstitute this committee. Kostas agreed, Dimitris agreed and we started a circle of contacts to find other interested parties, while at the same time we started discussions about the subject of the committee. Our initiative, if nothing else, was timely, because in 1990 the communist regime of our neighbor Albania had been overthrown and its borders had been opened, something that had as a consequence, given that Greece was also open for the Greek-speaking Albanians of the Northern Epirus, many Albanians to flock to Greece, Greek-speaking or not. Due to the influx of people, they could not be checked. Until then the borders were closed, perhaps because the communist regime was afraid that if they opened them, there would be no one left who wanted to live in the "communist paradise". But even before the Albanians, many immigrants from Poland had come to Greece after the collapse of the communist regime there as well. Later, with the collapse of the communist regime in all Eastern European states, immigrants came to Greece from other countries with a low standard of living compared to Greece, such as Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova and other countries of the former Soviet Union .

I don't remember whose idea it was but I do remember that the discussions of the new committee, which Sophia immediately joined, were held in a disco, somewhere near Saint Panteleimon, which was called the "Jamaica Reggae Club" and used to play Bob Marley who was my favorite musician. The guys who ran the discotheque had very advanced ideas and that's why they often sat down to listen

to our conversations. They too issued leaflets about the liberating message of reggae music. In this discotheque, or club if you prefer, because these places are no longer called discotheques like they used to be, one day there came a new interested party for the committee, Manolo (Manolis Vagias), who was not only going to become a member of the committee but also my personal friend to this day. He had come with a beautiful girl, Melita, who, although she came a couple of times to the committee's discussions, never became a member. Once, I also managed to bring Christos Roussos into the discussions, who after a major uprising in the prisons of Korydallos, where he had played a leading role, had been released with pardon from the President of Democracy. Roussos agreed to help as best he could, but did not have time to join the committee. However, he accepted to join the committee another militant of the left (Trotskyist), Tasos Papadopoulos, who was sensitive towards immigrants, due to the fact that he had been a teacher in a Greek school in a sub-Saharan African country and thus had been given the opportunity to see with his own eyes the poverty and misery that lead Africans to migrate. He, if I remember correctly, had not found us at the Jamaica Reggae Club but at the squat on the corner of Heiden and Acharnon that became known as Amalia's Villa. He found us there, because in the mornings the club was closed, with the consequence that we had nowhere to go and talk without paying, and that's why we were gathering at Heiden's squat. The bad thing is that he found us, when the committee was declining, as we will see below.

The first thing we agreed to do as a committee was to produce a magazine in the form and style of the magazine of the first committee, intended to show the public that interest in immigrant rights had not ceased to exist. To this end we were tasked with writing articles and finding photos. We also had to find money. I, as if I had a guardian angel, for the first time found some work through a friend, Spiros, the husband of Nota, whom I mentioned above. Spyros Baziotis, was one of the best people I met in my life and he always did everything he could to help me. He knew that I was looking for a job and asked some of his colleagues at work, as a result of which one of them introduced me to a painter who lived in Ampelokipi. He had taken a contract in Ano Glyfada, in a five-story apartment building, and every morning he would pick me up outside his house in his car and take me to work. I was in charge of the rubbing and he did the stuccoing and painting. From the beginning he found me slow at work because I didn't like to do rough work. After four days of work and a day of strike imposed on us by the builders union, without us being asked, the painter decided to fire me, paying me my wages but without paying me any stamps of social security. With the threat of reporting him to the I.K.A. (Fund of Social Security) he agreed to pay me half a stamp every day. That's how I found money to put towards the committee's magazine.

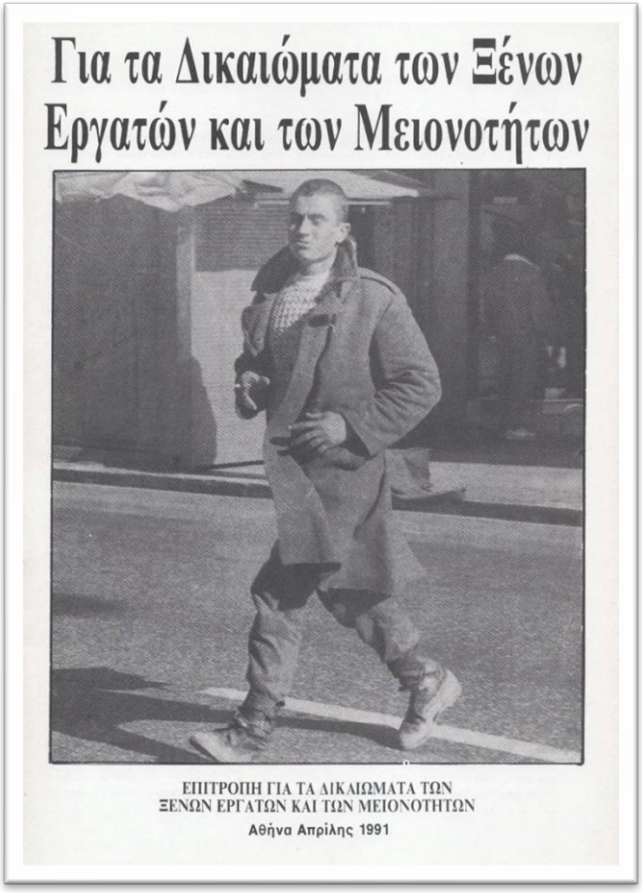
My long friendship and collaboration with Leonidas Christakis begins with the magazine about the immigrants

Now, in addition to the financial issue, someone had to undertake the publishing, and as was usually the case with me, no one knew how to, so I had to undertake that too. At that time, I was hanging out a little with Leonidas Christakis, the editor of "Ideodromio", whom I had personally met in prison. I had met him by chance at a book fair in 1989, and from then on we continued to meet, even work together, until he died 20 years later. When I found him, he was living on a ground floor near the end of Acharnon Street and he was working with an excellent girl, Chrysanthi Theou, who had two primary school-aged daughters from someone she had divorced, and lived nearby. Christakis taught her a lot about word processing, graphic art and publishing, as a result of which she not only published together with another woman a literary-political magazine, the " Πλάτη και λίγο παρακάτω " (Back and a bit further), but also took typing jobs from other publishers. She was such a good girl, that later she had found such jobs for me as well. Not to mention, Christakis took over the technical part of the committee's magazine free of charge, with the result that the magazine, in the middle of the spring of 1991, became a reality. But I will not forget that even carrying the printed magazine was left to me. I remember the lithographer, after he had printed it, he had bundled up the 1000 copies we had ordered and called us to go and get them. Everyone was busy and luckily, that day, I had chanced upon my old friend, Giannis Felekis, who had an old motorcycle with a sidecar (the "Grandma", as he called it) and with it we carried the magazine parcels to my house. This was the first magazine in my life where I was able to participate as a member of the editorial team, and to do this, I had to do most of the work myself. I had to be 35 years old to get to publish a magazine with others. Apostolidis and Papadopoulos took some parcels from this magazine to distribute, and Sophia and I were left with the rest. Dimitris, after the publication of the magazine, and after he had also published his article in it, thought it right to leave the committee, because he broke up with me. He left without contributing a single drachma to the magazine that published his article.

Taking our daughter to the first political-artistic event – A tribute to my unforgettable beloved fellow prisoner Christian Schluder

After the magazine came out and Dimitris left, we also stopped going to Jamaica Reggae Club. The fellows of the club, together with others, in May 1991 organized a reggae music concert in Propylaea to mark the 10th anniversary of the death of the great reggae composer, Bob Marley, who had died exactly 10 years earlier.

This was the first event we took our daughter with us, in a kangaroo, as they say a kind of pouch where they put in babies and mothers hang it in front of them. Before this event, I remember that I dropped the baby for the first and, thankfully, last time, as Sophia was handing it to me while we were getting ready at home to go to the event. Fortunately, the bones of the babies' heads are quite elastic, because a mistake like this could cause a baby to break his head.



Our committee magazine shaped and styled like the first committee's magazine, of 1987

I think we had already named the baby Christiana. We had "declared" her in the Athens registry office as Christiana, because, not being Christians, we did not baptize it. The idea to name our daughter Christiana was mine. I wanted in this way to honor the memory of my best foreign friend in prison, Christian Schluder, who was targeted by the guards for the communication between political prisoners that he ensured, resulting in his nerves being broken and his eventual suicide. A suicide that I probably could have prevented if I had stayed in Aegina if I

had stayed in Aegina in November 1979 and not gone on hunger strike to Korydallos. This strike was intended to save Sophia from dependence on psychotropic drugs, which Maratos gave her in abundance, as I have said before.

The two-day "Let's take the city" event and our effort to raise the awareness of the anarchist movement about the plight of immigrants

In the spring of 1991, a number of collectives from the anti-authoritarian milieu decided to organize a two-day (or three-day) event in the Pedio tou Areos (Field of Mars) park under the general title "Let's take the city". The discussions about its organization were taking place in the squat of Heiden and we also participated, after the invitation of those who had taken the initiative. Our committee was represented in the discussions by Apostolidis and Manolo. The two (or three) day event would include both discussions and screenings and concerts. We secured our own space and a small table, where we put our magazine and sold it at cost price.

I can say with confidence that the two (or three) day event was a success. More than ten collectives from the center of Athens and the suburbs and several musical groups participated. On the first day, discussions took place in the space of each collective, which wanted to organize a discussion. Sophia and I went to a discussion about conscription, in which the head of the Association of Conscientious Objectors, Spyros Psychas, who together with 11 others founded the Association on November 18, 1987, came to participate. Psychas, whom I had first seen in a gathering for Maragakis, Kostas Apostolidis had personally introduced him to me, at an event for conscientious objectors in the ceremony hall of the University of Athens (in the Propylaea). An anarchist, Armanius, who had gone to prison for some bombing action and then served in the army, also participated in the debate in the Field of Mars park about the refusal of conscription. He, if I remember correctly, together with others attacked Psychas, because the Association claimed an alternative social service to the military one. I jumped in and defended Psychas, arguing that what matters is that one does not serve in the army, even if one does not have the appetite or the fortitude to suffer the consequences of a head-on conflict with the army, such as total objection to serve. Total objection had already begun to be discussed at that time. It was the time when Maziotis was arrested for the first time on the charge of insubordination during general mobilization (conscription)(general mobilization lasted from 1974 to 2002) and he told them that as an anarchist he would never serve in their army, without claiming of them alternative social service. Thus he was recorded in history as the first total conscientious objector in Greece.

I don't remember if it was the second or third day, that we brought and showed at the event two videos. One was an interview of Giorgos Karampelias, as a representative of the first Committee for the Rights of Foreign Workers and Minorities, on Swedish television. The second was called "600 Volt Ward" and referred to the violent death of a Chilean man who was chased to the platform of the underground railway on suspicion of having stolen a wallet and who, to escape, climbed down the train tracks and was electrocuted. It was at that stage that Manolo got on the microphone and told the crowd that, although he too was a "beer drinker", it was not enough to drink beer at such an event, but we should raise awareness of the daily drama that immigrants live in Greece and do everything we can to support them.

Finally, as other collectives did, one day we also presented our own collective from the microphone. I remember that the text we had written was read by Sophia. But I don't think that "anyone's eye got wet": In all the days we didn't sell more than 14 magazines, 4 of which were taken by a single woman. In those days you were not considered a merchant when you sold a magazine at cost price. Today you are considered, so they produce and circulate printed material only those who have enough money and they do not sell them but distribute them for free.

Another event we participated in at that time, limited to handing out a leaflet in Greek and English, was the annual cultural festival of KASAPI, the Association of Filipino Immigrants. Apostolidis knew the president of that union, Joe Valencia, and that's why we were welcomed.

The inability of the "Committee" for collective work, the departure of its founder member and its temporary "life extension" by "blood donation" from a couple of journalists of the movement

Unfortunately, as time went on, disagreements began to arise between me and Apostolidis, regarding the way the Committee operated. He used to take initiatives and represent the Committee by intervening in various events, without us having met before, to decide collectively if one of us should intervene in an event. I did not want him to take initiatives on his own, in the absence of the Committee, but to be authorized by the Committee beforehand. I was annoyed, I remember, that he had intervened in some political event unrelated to our issue (immigrants) and had asked to speak. But the organizers objected and Bouketsidis, who was at the event, did not let him speak. I didn't like the image of the Committee that was coming out. Ultimately, Apostolidis insisted on taking initiatives without authorization and, as the majority of the Committee was positioned against his view, he left the Committee and declared that from then on he would support her, without participating. And indeed, he took a bundle of our magazines and managed to sell

them to various colleagues at work and other friends and acquaintances and brought us the money.

When Apostolidis left the Committee, in his place came a couple of journalists from the excellent magazine of the time called "Scholiastis", Tasos Sarantis, and Nana Kostidaki. Sophia and I also made friendly relations with them. With Nana, I remember, we had gone to various events and handed out our leaflets. Of these, I remember one that took place in Fokionos Negri and one on the hill of Strefi. In this last one I saw and heard, for the first and last time, Rolf Pole, the German revolutionary, whom I had supported, in the context of the anarchist movement, when he had been arrested in Greece, 15 years earlier, and had been extradited in West Germany. He had spent some years in prison in West Germany and, when he was released, the German state made life difficult for him, with the result that he decided to leave Germany and come to settle in Greece, where he did translations and German lessons. Pole was interested in our texts but did not devote more than a few minutes to us. I was impressed by his height and blond hair.

The "Committee" acquires offices but is not "kept alive"

The Committee's main problem was that it could not network with immigrants. We had found immigrants to translate our proclamations into Albanian and Arabic, and Karaplis was translating them into French, but no one was interested in becoming a member of the Committee. With Manolo, I remember, we had placarded at the Polytechnic University a proclamation in several languages, where we left contact details, but no one got in touch with us. We even rented a post office box at the Syntagma Square post office and sent letters to at least ten collectives, but the only one that answered us was one from Kiato. The one who was interested in our

Committee was Spyros Psychas, but not to join, but to be co-located with us in the offices of the Environmental Initiative of Athens, where already were the Voluntary Work of Athens and the Association of Conscientious Objectors (which at the time was underperforming). All these collectives centered on Psychas, who took care of the rent. I, in order to satisfy Psychas, convinced the Committee to co-locate with the above organizations, something we probably shouldn't have done, because that's how we lost the money we had collected from the magazines. And we didn't just run out of money. The Sarantis-Kostidakis couple also left us, when one day Sarantis threatened me with physical violence because I called him a journalist, and I told him that I don't want to see him in the Committee again. In particular, they had arrested a well-known left-wing immigrant, poet and painter, Dee Dee (Mohammed Dee Dee Fadul) from Sudan, and they had him in the Security Police

Headquarters for deportation. Sarantis had called me to undertake to support him as a Committee. I had disagreed, saying that the Committee could not undertake the support of anyone, because it was neither established for that purpose nor had the capacity to do so. If anyone could support him, it was Sarantis himself who was a journalist. Sarantis had threatened me up there, because he didn't like the label of journalist. I saw Sarantis again by chance years later and reminded him that, before he left the Committee, he had taken several magazines and taken them to a kiosk in Kanigos, where all the collectives of the wider and extra-parliamentary left could leave their magazines and newspapers, and also the anarchists. I had asked him for the money from the magazines and he said he would call me to bring it to me, which he never did. Instead, Tasos Papadopoulos, who had also taken a parcel of our magazines to sell, sold them and brought us the money.

After the departure of Sarantis-Kostidaki, the Committee's activities faded and it was not heard from again. However, with the Committee's weakening, its work was taken over by Nikos Yiannopoulos and the Movement for the Defense of Political and Social Rights, which had the Coalition of the Left behind them, and that is why they were effective. I remember one day, shortly after the launch of our magazine, I saw Yiannopoulos in Omonia with a loudspeaker, calling on people to support the immigrants. I want to believe that our Committee was the one that pushed Yiannopoulos and the foretold Movement to deal with immigrants.

The first trial of the first total objector in Greece, Nikos Maziotis

That spring, or summer, was when Nikos Maziotis was tried, for the first time, on the charge of disobedience during general mobilization. We had gone to his trial which took place in the Military Court of Athens, in Ruf, and thus we were given the opportunity to see that a remarkable support movement had been created, with the consequence that the court-martial hall was full of people who had come to support him. Vassilis Karaplis was among his lawyers. Before they tried Maziotis, they were trying a few poor soldiers who had ended up in court for minor crimes, but they didn't have a lawyer, so the court had appointed them a lawyer in military clothes. It had struck me that, whenever the time came for this lawyer to speak and defend a soldier, all he would say was:"The leniency". He was asking for the leniancy of the court. Pure mockery, that is. And to imagine that he would be paid by the sate, for everyone who "defended". I don't think they didn't give him anything, even a symbolic amount, at least. Finally, when it came time for Maziotis' trial, his lawyers spoke a lot, but the one who "stole the show" was Maziotis himself who delivered an amazing statement for the reasons he did not

want to serve. I call it amazing, because there was a comprehensive indictment against the Greek army for the crimes it had committed in the past, as well as for the evil it is doing now with its existence. On the other hand, Maziotis stated that he would willingly serve in a class army that would fight against the state in a civil war. He never gave up on the hope of a civil war in Greece again. His desire for a civil war had made a bad impression on me at the time, but, after many years, I read that Bakunin also wanted a civil war. Fortunately, such views will never prevail in Greece. Where civil wars prevail and take place, in Asia and Africa and Latin America, the world is suffering unimaginably and those who can are looking to leave these countries. Unfortunately, Maziotis' wish for civil war may not have come true in Greece, but it did in neighboring Yugoslavia the following year. It lasted nine whole years and caused enormous destruction and tens of thousands of dead and injured. Even the genocide of Muslims in Srebrenica. And it was not class but national and religious, i.e. a war between different religions and ethnicities. For those who don't know, I'll end my reference to Maziotis by saying that, in the end, he was sentenced to a few months in prison with a suspended appeal and got out.

The "Group for the prisons" of the "Voluntary Work of Athens"

Regarding the Committee again, our Committee may have weakened, but three of its members, specifically me, Sophia and Manolo, together with two others, Kyriakos Iosifidis and Ignatios Havanetidis, the following year we formed another group with the name "Group for the prisons". We formed this group within the framework of the wider collective called "Voluntary Work of Athens", whose "heart" was Spyros Psychas. We formed this group after his own proposal and the place where we held our founding meeting was the offices of the Athens Voluntary Work, in Solonos. And, of course, before forming this group, all of us, except for Manolo, had experienced some activities of the Voluntary Work.

One of these activities was its collaboration with a non-governmental organization that provided services to gypsies living in Gazi. It focused on help with their lessons for gypsies who went to school, but also gave reading and writing lessons to those who did not go to school. And it also helped financially, as it could, their families with volunteer offers. The heart of this initiative was a very good woman, Myrto Laimou, who was one of the few people among those I have met who did not hide any racism towards the gypsies (Roma) and therefore did not attribute to the parents the social exclusion of their children. In fact, she had realized that the best way to get to know the gypsies was to make friendly relations with them. The volunteers from the Voluntary Work had the opportunity to help the children with their lessons or teach them themselves. The place where all this happened was the place of a former shop in Gazi.

There you saw many children passing by every day and some sitting and others leaving. At that time Gazi was one of the most degraded areas of Athens. It didn't have a metro stop or busy luxury shops or anything. It was such a degraded area that the Greek state moved poor Turks there from Thrace, giving them a considerable amount in order to leave Thrace and settle in Athens. It was discussed then that the Greek state did this to weaken the electoral power that the Turks have in Thrace, when in one place they have the majority. I was not given the opportunity to meet any gypsies or any Turks, but in this initiative I met an extremely beautiful girl, Dorota, whose mother was Polish. There she was also met by a member of the group we had created for the prisons, Kyriakos, and after some years they and continued on the path of life together. The last thing I remember from the activities of the organization, which provided services to the gypsies, was its participation in a festival of the Municipality of Athens that took place in Gazi and included folk dances. It had made a bad impression on me, because the Greek folk dances were danced by Turks, while they were not dancing Turkish dances, like those that the Turks dance in Thrace. It was, in other words, another attempt to Hellenize the Turks of Athens.

The "Group for the prisons" began its activity by drawing up a statement of its aims. I did not participate in the drafting of this statement, because I did not want my point of view to prevail, because I did not intend to spend too much time on this initiative. I had already started to be active within the Association of Conscientious Objectors, which Psychas, at that time, was trying to revive after the long "hibernation", in which it had fallen after the release of Michalis Maragakis, after he had previously closed two and a half years in prison, and Thanasis Makris after he had served a year and a half. Despite my initial intentions, I ended up devoting more time to the "Group for prisons" than the others, except for Sophia who became the "heart" of the group, and I also devoted the most money, because that year I sold another property and had some money. So, having some money, I thought of setting up a fund, from which we could help foreign prisoners, such as e.g. the Albanians, the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis, who "had no fate under the sun". Somehow we found some addresses in some prisons and sent them our founding text. So the address of our group, which was also the address of Voluntary Work, at Solomou 27, began to receive letters from foreign prisoners asking for financial support. For me, this kind of support, it was not

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something new. I had already done a little in that area since I got out of prison. I remember then that I had given my mother's address and most people asking for financial support addressed me in their letters as "Father" (a priest) so that they could send their letters to me, even though I was not their relative. Prison services, in the early 1980s, did not block letters from prisoners to priests, but they did block letters to non-relatives.

The Palestinian "terrorist" Khaled and Kurdish long term convict Erdal Karasu

In addition to providing financial support to people who were in great need, Sophia thought of adopting, in a way, some prisoners who deserved it. To find such prisoners, he asked some lawyers, including Janna Kurtovic. From her, she learned about the much-tortured Kurdish long term convict Erdal Karasu, about whose torture Kurtovic had reached the Council of Europe. His story was so moving that Sophia "adopted" him and began an amazing effort to get him out of prison. As part of the "adoption" he had managed to pay a visit to Erdal, Korydallos, even though he was not a relative. She had also managed to convince another girl from the Voluntary Work, much younger, to "adopt" Erdal's brother, Ercan, who was also in Korydallos. This girl used to visit Ercan and take him things, claiming to be his fiancee. Another prisoner we dealt with at the time was the Palestinian Khaled, who was in Greek prisons, sentenced to 4 years in prison and we had heard that he was also wanted by Italy, who had sentenced him in absentia to life, for the piracy of the cruise ship "Achille Lauro", which led to the death of an American Jewish passenger. This prisoner was old, around 70, and had health problems, mainly with his eyes and stomach. But, despite his age, the prison guards of Korydallos did not hesitate to abuse him badly after his new arrest, following a group escape of a hundred or so prisoners. And yet this escape was probably staged. The ease with which hundreds of people escaped can only be attributed to the essential absence of guarding. And the guards had every reason to let the prisoners go, because the Minister of Justice Kouvelakis had given "the green light" to arrest the president of the prison guards union Aravantinos, who was accused of importing large quantities of heroin into the prison and of illegal release from prison of a major drug dealer who had been arrested for approximately 300 kilos of cocaine. Their purpose to prevent the arrest of Aravantinos succeeded, because the police declared their inability to arrest him, even inside the prison of Korydallos, where he was serving. At the same time, as I wrote, about a hundred prisoners were allowed to escape, as a result of which the Mass Media to riot against the Minister of Justice, until he was forced to resign.

Thus Aravantinos never entered prison, except as a guard. It should be noted that as his lawyer, Aravantinos had another minister of the government, Vangelis Giannopoulos, who, when Sophia and I were in it, we had him as a lawyer at the Areios Pagos (Supreme Court) and he had been totally inefficient, despite the 20,000 drachmas (a large amount for those years) which he had received from my father. In defense of Aravantinos, the newspapers wrote that Yiannopoulos had received several tens of millions of drachmas. It would probably be difficult for Aravantinos to justify this money, if the "where did you get it" then applied. Anyway, Haled had filed a lawsuit against three guards for torturing him, which went to trial after a couple of years. At the trial, he did not have a civil party counsel and we were unable to secure one for him. We had reached out to Karaplis and he had said that he would come to the trial against the guards, but he did not come. From the Mass Media only one journalist from a conservative newspaper had come. Nevertheless, Haled, as a plaintiff, was not afraid of his tormentors and spoke openly against them in court. The judges, since there were also forensic reports on Khaled's abuse and photos of his abused body had been published in newspapers, sentenced (for the eyes) one of his three torturers to 8 months in prison with a suspended sentence. I should not fail to mention here that, since our group dealt with Haled, the lawyer Irini Lazana, to whom our group had addressed at the time, supported him the most. We first met her in Venice in 1984, during the "International Meeting of Anarchists", to which she had come together with Kokkoras (Mihalis Protopsaltis). She had even spent money from her pocket to buy him medicine for his stomach. Regarding, finally, his eyes, Sophia had approached the ophthalmologist Manios who was a well-known resistance fighter against the seven-year dictatorship of the colonels, but she did not succeed, because at that time Manios had a grudge against the anarchists, because one of them, Kambouris, was in prison and had reached 80 days of strike without dying. Manios considered this strike fake and Sophia, like an anarchist too, "paid the bride".

I am visiting for the third and last time the most beautiful city of Greece, Corfu, not as a prisoner but free, together with my mate and our child

I, in the spring of 1992, due to abuses such as drinking too much beer daily in combination with taking antibiotics, contracted colitis. The hypochondria I suffered after my mother was diagnosed with cancer did not allow me to do a rectoscopy that a gastroenterologist in Solonos had recommended then. He had told me to do it in Sismanoglio hospital and he would supervise. In retrospect, I believe I did the right thing and did not go to a public hospital for a rectoscopy

at that time, because those I've heard having rectoscopy done in a public hospital, all complained that the examination for them was quite painful. My mother, who tried, much later, to do a rectoscopy in Sismanoglio, did not do it because of the pain. I, instead of having a rectoscopy and because I was afraid that I might have cancer, I decided to spend what may be the last months of my life, as best I could. To this end, I went with Sophia and our two-year-old daughter to two Greek islands, famous for their beauty: Corfu and Skiathos.

The old town of Corfu is the most beautiful town in Greece and perhaps the only one that has purely European characteristics from an urban planning and architectural point of view. We stayed in the center of the old city, because we were deceived by a tourist magazine, "Holidays", which presented the hotel we booked from Athens as being close to the sea. And from the hotel, when Sophia called to book a room, we were told that it was a hundred meters from the sea. And indeed it was a hundred meters from the sea, but the sea was the sea of the port and not the sea where one could bathe. So, to go swimming, we always took a bus. Except for one occasion when, as we were visiting the castle which is located on the edge of the city and is surrounded by a moat, we found that one of its gates led to a small beach, where there was a picturesque tavern and very few people bathing in the sea. The tavern belonged to the Municipality of Corfu and was run by an elderly couple. They didn't cook much but the fish and potatoes they fried were enough for us. In this sea and overlooking the islet of Vidos, where until two or three decades before we went to Corfu, in 1992, a juvenile prison operated, we took the only bath without taking a bus.

Vidos at a relatively closer distance from where we saw it

Next to Vidos is another much smaller islet, Lazaretto, an islet that was used as an exile for lepers and, during the second world war and the civil war, as a prison for resistance fighters and communists. Most of the executions of prisoners took place there, which made me think then that the last image the prisoners before the execution had of the world was the view of Corfu from the Lazaretto.

And since I'm talking about prisons, I don't fail to mention the active prison of Corfu, where, after the restoration of democracy in 1974, most tortures took place and in 1987 the prisoners, led by Giannis Petropoulos, managed to burn it down. However, because it was not completely destroyed, the Ministry of Justice repaired it and it is still working. My uncle Meltos had spent some years there as a communist (convicted with the Mandatory Law 375/1936 "for espionage"), and I only spent one night there, when I was locked up in prison. After all that, we couldn't help but go and see from outside this infamous prison. What we didn't expect was that it would be so difficult for us to find it. We asked various people but they did not know how to guide us and the information we received from very few people was unclear. Finally we found it in a place surrounded by large parks with forest, with the consequence that it does not have direct contact with the city. But opposite they have built a high school, so that the students can see what they will end up with if they don't do what their teachers and their families ask of them. The prison is circular and its walls are very high, so all we could do was walk around it. But even during the walk I was afraid that a policeman would shout at me, from the lookouts that surround the prison and are higher than its wall.

The prison of Corfu from above and the park that hides it well

While we were in Corfu, I felt so nicely that I didn't want to leave. At least not before the fortnight, we had planned to stay in Corfu, was over. Nevertheless, after about a week from our arrival, one of my teeth started to hurt a lot and also started receiving phone calls from Athens asking me to return urgently so that we could sell some property. I didn't want to go to a dentist in Corfu, since I knew one in Athens, and the painkillers did little against the toothache, while the phonecalls to come back were increasing and multiplying. The co-owners of the property insisted that if I did not return, they would lose the buyer. I did the stupid thing to give in and we returned from Corfu after 12 days. The property was not sold and since then I have not returned to beautiful Corfu. It was the third and last time I went, this one.

On the island of the favorite writer of my teenage years, the beautiful Skiathos

Our next trip was to Skiathos. I will never forget the day we went, because we almost missed the plane (and lost three plane tickets), because the taxi we had ordered from some company, one of those that send you a taxi by phone, never came and neither did they sent another. On the other hand, the taxis were very difficult to find and you could wait a whole hour in Ippocratous street and no taxi would take you to the airport. At the last minute, Sophia went and woke up a couple related to us, who had a car, from their afternoon nap and they took us to the airport. Since then I have lost the last vestige of trust in taxi drivers and whenever I travel, I avoid taking taxis, like "the devil avoid incense".

In Skiathos, in 1992, I managed to see in the center of town the house of my favorite Greek writer when I was young: Papadiamantis. I also saw the room and the bed where he died, at the age of 60. I say I managed, because since then I went to Skiathos several times, but the house was always closed to the public. Of course, Skiathos is not famous for Papadiamantis but for its natural beauties and its well-preserved island town. We stayed in a hotel near a large beach outside the town and bathed every afternoon, while in the evening we walked to the town. From the sea where we bathed, we had a view of a cemetery that is located at a high point of the city, with the result that the rectal examination that I had been asked to do, and the possible findings of it, perhaps bad, kept turning in my mind. I was afraid of cancer and the death that would ensue. Hypochondria is an ugly thing, and only those who have suffered from it can understand me.

The town of Skiathos from above. From the beach on the left in the background I could see the cemetery, as I was bathing

Anyway, before we left Skiathos, we took a ferry boat and visited Skopelos one day and Alonissos another. In Skopelos we climbed to the hill where the old town is located and there used to be a castle. On the top came and found us a ninety-year-old woman, who lived next to the top and all her relatives had died. I felt sorry for her, because she told us that every night the tourist shops that had opened at the top of the hill were making a mess and with their loud music did not let her sleep. In combination with what an elderly woman, from whom we had rented a room in Mykonos, had told us, what the ninety-year-old woman told us solidified in me the opinion that tourism is not good for all the inhabitants of the tourist islands but only for those who make money from it. I finish with Skopelos, mentioning that I revisited it with my daughter some 20 years later. We also climbed to the top of the old city. Of course, the ninety-year-old woman had died a long time ago.

The old town of Skopelos, at the top of which we had found the ninety-year-old woman

I finally had a colonoscopy, and not a rectoscopy, after about three months since my gastroenterologist had told me to. I had prepared myself mentally in the way I mentioned above. Of course, if I had cancer and I delayed finding it for three months, then I wouldn't be able to come through. On the other hand, the disease itself would have sent me to the hospital sooner. Nevertheless, I did not do the colonoscopy in a public hospital. I had it done privately, at the "Medical Center", and that's why it didn't hurt at all. But the gastroenterologist found a polyp that he didn't cut, and till the time I had it removed a year and a half later, I was sitting on hot coals because he hadn't told me there was no way it could turn into a malignant tumor. When after a year and a half I asked him why he didn't tell me, he replied that I hadn't asked him! And yet, as I found out later, he could have removed the polyp during the colonoscopy...

A death prompts me to type and publish "Το τρελόχαρτο" (Insanity certificate)

Something I have spent most of my time doing in that period has been typing the diaries I kept in 1987. And in this typing, what has driven me was fear, as in writing the diaries. This time, what I was afraid of, was dying and never again seeing the light of day. The occasion for me to start typing was the death of my comrade Christos Konstantinidis from cancer, at the age of 42, which took place in 1992. Konstantinidis, the last two times I had seen him, I had seen him in episodes that took place during his student occupations of schools in 1990 and 1991. Both times at night, in Patision, in front of the Polytechnic University, when Patision was closed by barricades and the street was full of fires to neutralize the tear gas, which was falling in abundance. The penultimate time I saw him we talked about the problem he was facing with his daughter, because she was about six years old and had to go to school. This was something that Konstantinidis did not want, because he knew how bad school is for both the child's intellectual development and its socialization. But he had not found a way to avoid it. The last time I saw him, I happened to be at a roadblock in Patision, at the height of Stournari, facing the police. I had my face covered, so that the cameras wouldn't record me, and at some point when things had calmed down a bit, I headed towards the main door of the Polytechnic University. There I found Konstantinidis and in order for him to get to know me, I revealed my face. I said something to him but he didn't answer me. Since it was no time for discussion, I returned to the roadblock. I never saw him again. The scene where I saw him last time was a scene of rebellion and rebellion was the goal of Konstantinides from the time I met him.

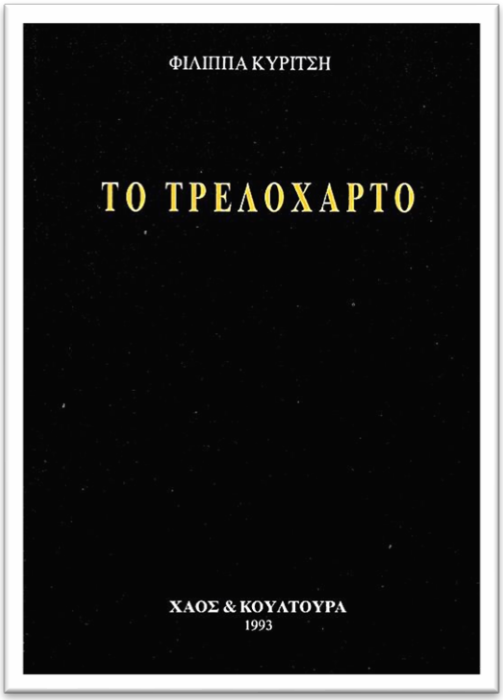
The murderous arson of the Kappa Marousis clothing store

During the student occupations of schools in 1991, Professor Temponeras was killed in Patras by right-wing thugs and this led to an escalation of the violent protests. The bad thing is that this escalation had then led to the arson of the Kappa Marousis clothing store, in Panepistimiou. I, when I had heard that the building was on fire, had gone down to the center of Athens to see what was happening. I found about a hundred onlookers outside the building watching the fire that must have been started by some Molotov cocktails, the kind that are thrown at unrelated to the riots shops, in such situations. Panepistimiou avenue was empty of protesters, because the police had pushed them beyond Syntagma Square. And we all waited for the Fire Brigade to put out the fire. But the Fire Brigade came at least half an hour later, with the result that four people died inside the building from the fire. In the following days, responsibilities were sought from the Fire Brigade, but its representatives claimed that the fire engines could not approach the building, because the road was closed by the protesters. I had seen with my own eyes that it was open. But even if it was closed, the vehicles of the Fire Brigade could push the protesters away by turning water cannons on them.

Leonidas Christakis publishes "Το τρελόχαρτο" (Insanity certificate) - Another botchery that marked my life

To return to the book I was typing, I finished typing it in 1993 and did not include in it everything that I had in the manuscript. In the manuscript I used some designations for the judges that might cost me prosecutions. Garbis had noticed this too, when I had taken the manuscript to him to publish. By then he had the person most inappropriate for me read it: The one who in the past had told Garbis, that I had told Giannis from Peristeri, that we should be careful when we speak in front of Garbis' henchmen. This had cost me at the time a vicious attack from Garbis, and for that reason I did not have a good opinion of that person at all. Now, the same person, went to Garbis and showed him the dangerous points of my book, with the consequence that Garbis would not publish it. After that, while typing, I removed or modified some designations that could have cost me prosecutions. The pagination was done by Leonidas Christakis, who also undertook to publish it, within the framework of his own publications "Chaos and Culture". I put in all the money, of course. And not only that: I also financed the publication of an issue of the "Panderma" magazine that he was publishing then, which also contained an article of mine about the secretary of the K.K.E. during the civil war: Nikos Zachariadis. The bad thing is that the cover of my book the printer, Feretos who printed most of the printed matter of the anarchist milieu, he did it "like his

face", by failing to print yellow on black correctly on many of the covers. But the bookbinder was inefficient too, because he didn't manage to put the letters that were on the back of the book in the middle of the back. So in terms of appearance, the only, so far, book I have written in my life, the Greek craftsmen made it "like their faces".



One of the few correct covers of my diary book of the era I was trying to be exempted from conscription

The event about the prisons in the squat of Heiden and Acharnon (Villa Amalias)

I don't remember how we were found by two comrades, a young man and a young woman, who came to our house one day and expressed an interest in the group's activities for prisons. I remember my comrade, Giorgos M., because he did a lot for our group, as we will see below. I don't remember the girl. I also remember that, from the discussion we had, it emerged that the best solution for highlighting the struggle that our group did for the prisoners, would be an event at the squat of Heiden. Giorgos took over the contact with the squat and I undertook to gather the material of the event and the means to publicize this material. In particular, to rent a video projector, to show a video tape I had made of the prison riots in 1990, riots that started from the prisons of Halicarnassus, in Crete.

In the uprising of Halicarnassus, just like three years earlier in the uprising of the prison of Corfu, the leading role was played by Giannis Petropoulos, who also wrote his first book, having the subject of this uprising, “Flayers of dreams". I also took it upon myself to find materials to create a poster calling for Heiden's event on prisons. I had a very good photo from the riot in the prisons of Corfu in 1987 that was given to me by Louloudis, whom I mention above. So a very nice two-color poster was made (red with a black and white photo inset), which was printed in several copies and put up by our group and other interested parties of the Heiden’s squat. Although I never liked putting up posters, I was the one in our group who put up the most posters. We also made a rough brochure about the case of Erdal Karasou.

In order to be present at the event, I had also invited Giannis Petropoulos, who had recently been released from prison, after many years of action by a large support movement towards him. This movement, among others, had also led to a trial at the court of appeals, after the passing of a law, which gave the right to lifers who were imprisoned without the right of appeal, to appeal retroactively. I had been to this trial, where "big names", such as the psychiatrist Stefanis and the professor of Panteio Aphrodite Koukoutsakis, were paraded as defense witnesses for Petropoulos. In fact, I had offered to testify as a witness, politicizing the action of Petropoulos. But Petropoulos didn't want politicization and that's why he didn't ask me to testify. At the trial, Petropoulos put on a show, something that always appeals to journalists. The next day the papers were on his side. The journalist at the time, and later minister, Giorgos Lianis dedicated an hour-long television show to Petropoulos, where, among others, he interviewed Katerina Gogou. Gogou had then read one of her poems about Petropoulos. I don't remember if Petropoulos was released because of this trial, however in 1993 he was out and I invited him to the Heiden’s squat for the event about prisons. And, indeed, he came but did not sit until the program began. At least he saw the prison struggle posters I had collected over the years and taped them to the walls of the squat’s big hall where the screening would take place. Shortly before he left, Maziotis approached him and asked him to make an appointment to talk. Petropoulos told him that, whenever he wanted, he could reach him through me and if he wanted a phone, he should take mine. Maziotis never asked me to put him in touch with Petropoulos but I took advantage of the opportunity that approached us and, when Petropoulos left, I asked him for information about his case with the military. I knew that he had been recaptured, many months after his trial, and released after 50 days of hunger strike in military prisons. If I remember correctly, he had told me that he had been issued a warrant for insubordination again. I advised him to continue his struggle against the army (a struggle for which I had dedicated to him

my book, "Το τρελόχαρτο" (Insanity certificate) and told him that the only thing they could do to him was to "fart on his balls". This was the first and last time I spoke to Maziotis, and I spoke to him because Petropoulos introduced me.

The event went well. We had over two hundred people. In addition to showing the videotape of the 1990 prison riots, we also showed, I think, some prison-related film that I can't remember now. After the videotape of the riots was shown, since no one else in our group was willing to speak to the public, I spoke. Then there was a discussion that started with questions for me. What I remember from the

conversation, was my argument with someone from the anti-authoritarian newspaper "Exegersi (Uprising)" which was published by Giorgos Vlassopoulos by then, and which later evolved into "Path of Freedom". In particular, I had raised the issue of attending the courts as support for various people who were being tried for acts of armed violence, at a time when newspapers, such as "Exegersi", were defending them. I was saying that at least someone from this newspaper should come to court and not just call for a riot in the streets, as the newspaper used to do. I had brought the example of the trial of Giorgos Balafas who was accused of the execution of the prosecutor Theofanopoulos, where "three and the cuckoo" came to support. I used to say that those who were judged would take courage if they did not feel alone. The representative of the "Uprising" insisted that they were doing the right thing by not going to the courts for support and facing the trials by taking people down the street. I also remember that the issue of prisoner “adoption” advocated by the “Group for the prisons” was discussed. There were reactions but we were covered by the lawyer Katerina Iatropoulou who had also come to the event. I, from one point on, left the foreground of the discussion, as I always do, because I don't like the discussions to be limited to me. I left asking anyone interested to contact our team. Out of all this world, only one girl, Eleana, was interested. Fortunately, financially, due to Giorgos M. who did a fundraiser for the expenses of the event, we covered the expenses.

Eleana, the hangout of Peristeri and the series of radio broadcasts about prisons

We saw this girl, Eleana, one day, as we were returning to our apartment in Ippokratous, waiting for us sitting at the entrance of the apartment building. She had left her home and came to us to host her for a few days, as we did. With her, one day, I went to the Peristeri hangout in Degleri Square, for the first of a series of discussions on the subject of conscription. We had known the Peristeri hangout earlier from Katerina Iatropoulou who had told us that the hangout had its own people at the inter-municipal radio station "Diavlos 10" (10, because it represented 10 municipalities) and they were willing to do a series of broadcasts for the

prisons. The series of broadcasts they had then every day was called "Works of the Mind" and it was presented by Antonis Peronis and Ignatios Havanetidis, with whom we later formed the "Group for Prisons". With these excellent presenters took place the series of broadcasts about prisons, which I mentioned above, and it was also quite successful. In each broadcast, they dealt with a different type of prison, such as men's, women's, juvenile prisons, military prisons, etc. Sophia had been to most of the broadcasts, where, in one of them, she had also brought Thanasis Makris, ideological conscientious objector who had also been in prison, at the time Maragakis was in, and spent a year and a half in military prisons. He talked about the military prisons in "Diavlos 10". I spoke about the violent death of a juvenile prisoner who had been tortured by guards. This was the first, but not the last, time I went on the radio live. I almost lost my temper, because while I was "on the air" and talking about the death of the minor from torture, I had Katerina Iatropoulou at the table across from me, who was playing with a metal kitten pinned to her lapel. As she was playing, the kitten jumped and landed on the table and everyone was trying to hold back their laughter. I had a great struggle to contain myself as I spoke on the microphone, at that moment, about death by torture. Anyway, after the end of all the broadcasts about the prisons, the Peristeri hangout had produced a relevant brochure, where they said the best things about me and Sophia.

At the Peristeri hangout talking about the refusal to enlist

As I said before, with Eleana I went to the Peristeri hangout for the first of a series of discussions about the refusal of conscription. Previously, on another day, I had gone to the hangout together with Giannis Chrysovergis, one of the oldest conscientious objectors and most "beloved" of them in the Mass Media. There at a convention we had spoken about conscientious objection and secured the convention's approval for the series of debates on conscription. I had gone to the discussion only with Eleana, because Sophia had stayed at home with the child who had not yet turned three years old. That's what I did too, when Sophia went to the broadcasts of "Diavlos". Only once did we manage to have my mother hold the child and go to the radio station together. Anyway, the draft refusal debate was a big hit. Around 40 people had come and many of them joined the discussion after my introduction. The biggest backlash I had had was from communists who, inspired by the Bolshevik coup d'état of October 1917 (with the old calendar) which was based on the army, always argue that young people should go to the army to learn the arms in order to do what the bolsheviks did. Unfortunately, this discussion was the only one that took place from the series we had planned, because then they stopped gathering because, they said, they were all the time

busy supporting the bus drivers who engaged in violent demonstrations against the government. I personally believe that, even if the bus drivers had not engaged in riots, some excuse would still have been found to not continue discussions with such "inflammatory content", such as the refusal of conscription.

The great bus drivers' strike of the 1990s and my experiences from the bus drivers of that time

Something worth mentioning about the bus drivers' strikes and riotous demonstrations of that time is that their union secretary happened to be a classmate of mine in the last two grades of the six-form high school, whom I had known "from the opposite side", i.e. as a person who liked to bully on a very scared classmate. Since I watched the Mass Media to deify him for the violence that the bus drivers used in their demonstrations (they had gone so far as to completely strip their colleagues), I sat down and wrote a letter to the newspapers. In this I said that the class in high school, where I was a classmate of this trade unionist, produced remarkable scientists, from doctors to teachers in secondary education, but none of them was propounded by the Mass Media. Instead, they deified the bus driver, thus proving that the role models they propound to the Greeks were the bus drivers. This letter was published and made known to Giannis Serifis, who, on some occasion when we were in some court, where I had gone for support (probably Balafa's), "laid hands" on me. I explained to him the reasons I wrote the letter but he probably didn't take them into account. This bus driver, by then, even appeared as a supporter of those accused of terrorism, such as Balafas, whom he had visited in a hospital, during a hunger strike. To finish with this classmate of mine, I had not seen him since high school and only saw him on TV, until one day, after the letter, I saw him on Strefi Hill playing with his son. I didn't talk to him, he didn't talk to me, and after eight years, at the age of 45, he died.

Here it is worth saying a few things about the bus drivers, as I have come to know them. Of course, those I met may not represent the majority, but the mere fact that they were comfortable behaving like this suggests that they were tolerated by their colleagues. I don't have anything against bus drivers in general and maybe things have changed a bit since the 90s, but up until that time bus drivers were the ones I'd had most quarrels with. They considered the vehicles their home and in them they behaved as they wanted. I characteristically remember a certain incident, when I had taken the last bus from Vrilissia for Athens, at 12 o'clock at night, and

four girls got on after me and they didn't have tickets, because at that time the booths that sold them were closed. But they had one thousand (drachmas) banknote and asked the driver, who was then obliged to sell tickets in emergency cases, four tickets. The driver, a stocky guy, wouldn't accept the banknote and insisted that the girls get off the bus, even though they were so far away from their homes in the middle of the night and they would be obliged to look for a taxi that would cost them a lot of money. I had to step in and give them four tickets, which luckily I had on me, so that the driver wouldn't force them off the bus. On another occasion, again in Vrilissia, an Albanian builder had entered through the back door in his dirty work clothes. The driver, who at that time could also play the inspector whenever he wanted, saw him in the mirror and called him forward asking for the ticket. The Albanian did not have a ticket, so the driver asked him for a 2000 drachma fine. The Albanian didn't have one and the driver decided to drive the bus to the nearest police station, to arrest the Albanian, as drivers often did back then with passengers caught without a ticket and without money for the fine. The Albanian begged him to get off at the next stop, but the driver continued to drive, adamant. I had to intervene again and give the 2000 drachmas to the driver, so that the Albanian would not be taken to the police custody. On another occasion, in Panormou, during the day, a young mother got on the bus with her child who she had just picked up from daycare. However, she did not have a ticket and asked the driver, giving him a bill (100 drachmas). The driver did not accept it and told her that since she did not have a ticket, he would take her and her child to the police. The young lady with the child begged him to drop her off at the next stop, but he didn't mind, he continued on his way as if nothing was happening. When we got out to Alexandras, I approached the driver and asked him to drop the lady off, but he didn't do anything. He said he was going to hand me over to the police too. Luckily he had to stop to drop someone off and I convinced the young lady to run with the kid so she could get off too. So we evaded the police. At another instance I was with Sophia, my daughter, who was four years old at the time, and a cousin of Sophia, and we stopped a bus to get on. Because I was late getting on so that the little one could get on, the driver, though he saw me clinging to a brace through the open door, closed the door, took my hand with it, and while I was in the street he advanced and led me away. Good thing they yelled at him and made him stop. He wouldn't have a problem if he killed me. The courts have always vindicated the bus drivers, just like the cops.

Something else now. From a childhood friend of my brother who was a bus driver, and whom I met on a bus just before the end of his shift, staying with him until he finished his shift and went to a hotel in Kotzia Square, I learned that in this hotel, where the drivers gathered waiting to start a night shift, there were rooms where the drivers did what they pleased with whores.

In general, there must have been very vulgar people among the bus drivers, because in 1993, during their mobilizations, which were also supported by the anti-authoritarians, they had badly beaten and completely stripped their opposition colleagues (as I said above), in the middle of the day in Omonia. In fact, they had taken all their clothes and forced them to leave naked, giving the mob the opportunity to laugh at them and to the crows, i.e. the newspaper photographers, the opportunity to photograph them naked. Even the Greek police, who are not famous for respecting human rights, have not committed such a disgrace, judging by the many convictions that Greece has received from the European Court of Human Rights, because of its police. At the time when all of the above was happening, the secretary of the Athens bus drivers' union was my classmate. Let everyone draw their own conclusions.

Prostitution enters the everyday life of Greeks

The 90s in Greece was the decade when prostitution ceased to be a means of relaxation for soldiers, marginals and a minority of other perverts from all rungs of the social ladder, and became a means of entertainment for the third of the number of sexually active Greek men, as evidenced by Professor Lazos in his book "Prostitution and transnational human trafficking in modern Greece**»** (2002). To this contributed the opening of the borders of the countries of eastern and south-eastern Europe, which until the collapse of the Soviet Union also had a communist regime that prohibited immigration. When all these countries, swept away by the collapse of the communist regime in Russia, also got rid of the communist regime, they opened their borders and a lot of people started immigrating. Among them there were many young women who wanted a better life than the one they lived in their country, especially after the fall of communism when the economies of these countries experienced a great crisis. But it may be that in the above countries the communist regime collapsed and its place was taken by the market economy (capitalism, as many like to call it), power, despite everything, did not change hands. It was left in the hands of the uniformed, secret police and their associates in the world of organized crime, with the consequence that immigration became a source of enormous profit for those who controlled it. Taking advantage of their weapons and impunity, they engaged in all kinds of illegal trade, among which the most profitable was the trade in women who wanted to emigrate or could not avoid being kidnapped by organized crime. In these countries appeared a bunch of legal or semi-illegal employment agencies and a bunch of «headhunters» targeting young women who wanted to immigrate. With promises of profitable jobs in Western countries, as well as in Greece and Turkey, these traffickers led, legally or illegally, many of the young women, who hoped for a better job abroad

or were simply victims of kidnapping, to the foreign countries I mentioned above, where they were sold to pimps. They took away all their legalization documents and with violence and torture forced them to be sold. In Greece, then, as now, the pimps have the best relations with the police and the judges, who probably secure from them illegal money and women, and that's why they can't be pursued. At that time in particular, the legal advertising of prostitution under any other name (to keep the pretexts as well, so that everyone could pretend to be unsuspecting) was so great, that all the newspapers and magazines were full of full-color ads with half-naked women. The countryside in particular, where until then there were very few brothels because the societies in the countryside were so restricted that everything was learned, was filled with brothels that legally operated as bars, entertainment centers and massage parlors. After all this, it was natural consequence for prostitution in this form (bars, night clubs, etc.) to reach Lefkada as well. And not only in Lefkada but also under my house there.